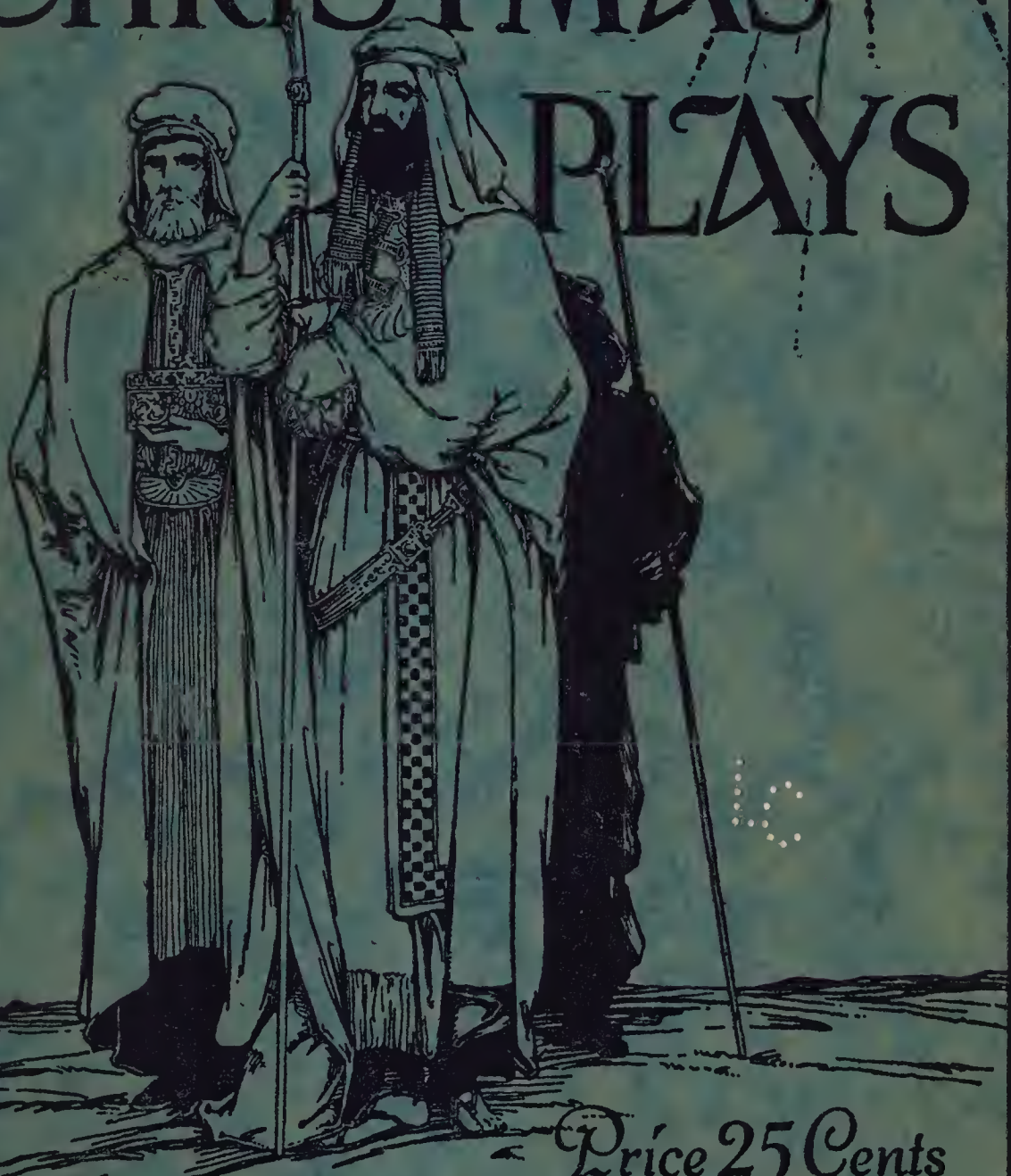
PN 6120
.C5 M4
Copy 1

MERRY CHRISTMAS PLAYS



Price 25 Cents

WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
BOSTON

A. W. Pinero's Plays

Price, 50 Cents Each

THE AMAZONS Farce in Three Acts. Seven males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, not difficult. Plays a full evening.

THE CABINET MINISTER Farce in Four Acts. Ten males, nine females. Costumes, modern society; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

DANDY DICK Farce in Three Acts. Seven males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours and a half.

THE GAY LORD QUEX Comedy in Four Acts. Four males, ten females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors and an exterior. Plays a full evening.

HIS HOUSE IN ORDER Comedy in Four Acts. Nine males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE HOBBY HORSE Comedy in Three Acts. Ten males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery easy. Plays two hours and a half.

IRIS Drama in Five Acts. Seven males, seven females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

LADY BOUNTIFUL Play in Four Acts. Eight males, seven females. Costumes, modern; scenery, four interiors, not easy. Plays a full evening.

LETTY Drama in Four Acts and an Epilogue. Ten males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery complicated. Plays a full evening.

Sent prepaid on receipt of price by

Walter H. Baker & Company

No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

Merry Christmas Plays

And Entertainments

By Various Authors

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.
1916

PN6120
C5M4

Merry Christmas Plays

CONTENTS

	PAGE
MERRY CHRISTMAS, SANTA. Six males, twelve females or more	3
WHO TRIMMED THE CHRISTMAS TREE. Two males, two females	15
HOPE FOSTER'S CHRISTMAS STAR. Five males, eight females	25
BONNIE'S CHRISTMAS EVE. Three males, one female	41
THE FIRST CHRISTMAS. Six males, five females	53
SANTA CLAUS' FROLICS. Six to eight children and Santa Claus	63
THE MERRY CHRISTMAS OF THE OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN HER SHOE. One male, one female and ten or twelve children	71
THE WIDOW MULLIN'S CHRISTMAS. Eight males, eight females	87

COPYRIGHT, 1916, by WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

SEP 29 1916 $0.25

©CLD 45014

No. 1.

MCW 02'16

Merry Christmas, Santa

A Christmas Operetta for Children

By Edith Burrows

Merry Christmas, Santa

CHARACTERS

SANTA CLAUS.
BETTY, BOBBY, BILLY, BABY } *the Christmas children.*
CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.
SANDMEN ELVES.
DREAM FAIRIES.
UNSELFISH CHRISTMAS WISHES.
SELFISH CHRISTMAS WISHES.

COSTUMES

SANTA CLAUS. Regulation time-honored costume.

THE CHRISTMAS CHILDREN. Night-dresses for Betty and Baby, pajamas for Bobby and Billy.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT. Long flowing robes of white. Her hair hangs loose and is bound with a silver ribbon about her forehead. She carries a wand tipped with a silver star.

SANDMEN ELVES. Little boys with elf-suits and pointed caps of gray or sand-colored muslin. They carry bags of sand slung over their shoulders and stoop under their supposed weight.

DREAM FAIRIES. Graceful little girls who must be able to dance well. They wear little gauzy gray dresses hanging straight from shoulder to knee and ballet slippers so that their dancing may be noiseless.

UNSELFISH CHRISTMAS WISHES. Little girls in costumes similar to those of the Fairies, but of varied rainbow tints.

SELFISH CHRISTMAS WISHES. Little girls with dresses just like those of the Unselfish Wishes, but with ugly dark concealing cloaks worn over them. These outer garments should be easy to remove quickly.

ARGUMENT

The children are assembled in front of the fire on Christmas Eve, discussing what they want Santa to bring them. The Christmas Spirit overhears their selfish remarks and resolves to open their eyes to the real meaning of Christmas, so she sends the Sandmen Elves and Dream Fairies to them to cause a magic sleep and dream. In their dream they see the lovely court of the Christmas Spirit where beautiful and unselfish Christmas Wishes are the attendants and where their own selfish and unlovely little Christmas Wishes hover on the outskirts of the happy throng. They are aroused to a sense of their selfishness and resolve to begin to show their new spirit by giving Santa a real Christmas. Aided by the Christmas Spirit and her attendants, they get presents for him, hide, and then surprise him as the play ends.

Merry Christmas, Santa

SCENE.—*Before the fireplace on Christmas Eve,—followed by the Court of Christmas. This is arranged by a double curtain system. A shallow part of stage toward front is curtained off and represents the modern room. A portable wooden fireplace and two chairs or so will serve to complete the suggestion of the room in the semi-light of the fireplace. When the change takes place the stage is entirely darkened, the curtain is pulled aside, the furniture is removed and the back stage is revealed as the Christmas Court. White cotton plentifully sprinkled with shining dust, white fur rugs if possible, and great branches of holly, mistletoe, evergreen and sprays of paper poinsettias adorn the Court. At the back and sides are evergreen branches sprinkled thickly with shining cotton snow and gleaming with many colored electric lights which illuminate the Court. In the centre is the high white throne of the* SPIRIT, *approached by two or three steps.*

(*The curtain rises, disclosing the shallow scene representing the room with the fireplace which throws out a dim light. At either end of the stage are curtained entrances. The children enter at* L., *carrying their stockings which they hang in front of the fireplace, then sing.*)

I. "WE WANT!"

(*Tune*—"*Rig-a-Jig.*")

CHILDREN. Oh, Christmas brings to children joys,
A merry tree and heaps of toys,
And everything for girls and boys,
We want, we want, we want!
A rocking-horse and a great big drum,
Hoops that roll and tops that hum,
Dolls, teddy-bears and a sugar-plum,
We want, we want, we want!

BETTY (*speaking*). I want a lovely doll with hair in curls!

BOBBY.
Huh! dolls are silly things, just fit for girls;
I want a soldier suit and great big gun,

(*Points an imaginary gun.*)

BILLY (*interrupting*).
To play kill Injuns; oh, what jolly fun!
I want a train of cars and make-b'lieve store,
A ball and bat and glove and—oh, lots more!

BABY.
And I should like a woolly teddy-bear,
And funny Kewpie doll with painted hair.

BETTY. But how in the world will Santa ever get all that we want in just one stocking apiece? Let's each get another stocking and hang it up and then hide and wait and see if he fills them all.

OTHERS. Yes, yes!

(*They all scamper off to* L. *As they disappear, the* CHRISTMAS SPIRIT *enters from* R. *She waves her wand and calls.*)

SPIRIT.
What ho, my helpers, hearken and obey!
Sandmen and Fairies, hither wend your way.

Enter from R. *the* ELVES, *and from* L. *the* FAIRIES.

A conversation I've just overheard
That in this Christmas season's quite absurd.
The children of this house have greed so shocking,
That each has gone to fetch another stocking!

(ELVES *and* FAIRIES *appear greatly shocked.*)

What Christmas really is I mean to show
When they return, so weave your magic slow.
Remember, I depend on you,—now go!

(ELVES *and* FAIRIES *lightly vanish through the entrances through which they came. The* SPIRIT *goes toward the right curtain and disappears as the children reënter from* L. *As they hang up the new set of stockings, the* ELVES *very quietly steal on from* R. *and, unobserved by the children, begin to very softly scatter the sand from their bags.*)

BETTY (*turning from the fireplace*). Ooh! my, but it must be getting late. I'm sleepy.

(*She sits down in front of the fire nodding.*)

BABY (*yawning and rubbing her eyes with her fists*). So am I.

(*She sits down and leans against* BETTY, *almost immediately falling asleep.*)

BOBBY. Look at Baby! Well, never mind, we'll wake her when Santa comes.

(*He sits down near her and begins to nod.*)

BILLY (*yawning and sitting down*). You—wake me, too—will you?

(*They all sleep;* ELVES *tiptoe forward and sing.*)

II. ELF SONG

(*Tune—"Sleep, Baby, Sleep."*)

ELVES. Sandmen are we,
From Sleepyland you see,
And as we scatter o'er the land
Our sleepy little grains of sand,
How very odd,
All children nod!

FIRST ELF. There, I think the sand has worked!

SECOND ELF (*going over to the children and poking them*). Oh, yes, they are sound asleep.

FIRST ELF. Then we're quite ready for the Dream Fairies, and here they come.

(*As he speaks, the* DREAM FAIRIES *come on from* L. *and cross to the centre of the stage. The* ELVES *take a position at the right of the stage.*)

III. DREAM SONG

(*Tune—"Sweet and Low."*)

FAIRIES. Dreams, ah, dreams, sweetest dreams,
Swiftly we weave for you,
So fair it almost seems
Each wondrous dream is true;

Fairest of lovely Christmas dreams,
Woven of firelight's dancing gleams,
To your spirits bring,
As we softly sing,
As we sing.

(*At the close of this song a dance of the* DREAM FAIRIES, *or* FAIRIES *and* ELVES, *if desired, takes place around the sleeping children, after which a* FAIRY *speaks.*)

FAIRY.
Oh, Christmas Spirit, we have used full well
Our fairy powers and cast a magic spell,
Now let these children off their slumber shake
And dreaming ever, think themselves awake.

(*Quick curtain to allow fireplace, chairs and front curtain to be removed. While this is going on the music of the Fairy dance may be repeated or the* FAIRIES *may repeat their song behind the scenes. When the stage is again revealed, it is the Court of the* CHRISTMAS SPIRIT *who is seen enthroned and surrounded by her attendants. At the front of the stage to the right are the* ELVES, *to the left the* FAIRIES, *and in the centre the children still sleeping in the same positions as they were in front of the fireplace.*)

SPIRIT.
Fairies and Elves, since you have done my pleasure,
You have my thanks in very fullest measure.

(*Rises and waves wand.*)

Awake, small visitors from mortal's land,
And in our Christmas revels lend a hand!

(*The children stir, rub their eyes, gaze about them in astonishment, and rise.*)

BETTY. Where are we? Who are these arrayed?
BABY. Ooh! Betty, Bobby, Billy, I'm afraid!

SPIRIT.
Have no fear, little ones; no harm shall come,
I am the Christmas Spirit, this (*indicating the Court*), my home.

BOBBY (*pointing to the* UNSELFISH WISHES). And who are these that seem so fair?

SPIRIT (*to* WISHES). Tell them in song, make glad the air.

IV. CHRISTMAS WISHES

(*Tune—"Drink to me only with thine eyes."*)

WISHES. We are the wishes sweet and fair,
Of all unselfish hearts,
Each is a thought for others spent
That from a pure soul starts;
For Christmas is the time to think
Of giving, not of gain,
The time to free all hearts and lives
From every selfish stain.

BILLY (*to* SPIRIT).
And do all Christmas Wishes really live
Here in your Court? Then could you give
Permission for my Wish to speak to me?

SPIRIT. Let this boy's Wish come forward! (*As one of the ugly little* SELFISH WISHES *steps forward.*) This is she.

BILLY. This ugly one my Wish,—that cannot be!

WISH.
A Selfish Wish is yours and I am she.
You've made me outcast from my native haunt;
My comrades shun me for my name's "I Want."

(BILLY *hangs his head ashamed.*)

BETTY (*going up to one of the most beautiful* WISHES). I'm sure this one is mine; (*as the* WISH *looks at her*) just look, she knows me.

WISH (*drawing away*).
Nay, I do not. I'm a single rose
Wished by a newsboy for his mother's gift.
I cost him many pennies and great thrift.

SECOND SELFISH WISH (*to* BETTY). I am your Wish.

THIRD SELFISH WISH (*to* BABY). And I to you belong.

FOURTH SELFISH WISH (*to* BOBBY).
And you keep me outside the happy throng.
Oh, dear, oh, dear, I'm sure that this is wrong!

BOBBY (*to the* SPIRIT).
Kind Spirit, tell us, tell us what to do
That we may make our Wishes fair for you.

V. CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

(*Tune*—"*Holy Night.*")

SPIRIT. Wish for peace, wish for joy,
Wish to greedy thoughts destroy,
Every thought you for others take,
All unselfishness will make
Christmas Wishes fair,
Christmas Wishes fair!

(*Full chorus repeats this song.*)

BETTY. Well, I for one am going to take that advice at once. Where shall we begin to wish?

SPIRIT. Why not wish something nice for Santa Claus? He'll be here presently.

BILLY. Yes, he's always giving us things, and we never think of giving him anything. I think that's horrid!

BOBBY. So do I, and I'm going to give him —— (*Pauses and scratches his head in perplexity.*) I have it—a bag of oats for his reindeer!

BETTY. Oh, I'm sure he'll like that. I'm going to give him a muffler; he must need one, driving around in the cold so much.

BILLY. I'm going to give him a jolly big pair of fur gloves.

BABY (*sadly*). I don't know what to do; I can't buy him anything, but I do want to give him a present. (*Brightly.*) I think I'll give him my best Teddy-bear!

SPIRIT. I'm sure he'll find that of all gifts most fair.

BOBBY. But how are we to get these presents in time if Santa is coming here soon?

SPIRIT. Your Wishes will attend to that.

(*She waves her wand and the four* WISHES *belonging to the children exeunt,* R.; *sounds of sleigh-bells are heard.*)

BETTY. Sleigh-bells,—that must be Santa now!

BILLY. Let's hide and surprise him with our gifts later.

(*The children all hide as* SANTA *enters from* L.)

ALL. Hail, Santa!

VI. SONG OF SANTA

(*Tune—"Jingle Bells."*)

SANTA. I'm a busy man,
At this time of year,
Doing what I can
To bring Christmas cheer.
Christmas Wishes fair,
Gladly I greet you,
I shall take the best of care
To make you all come true.
Would you like to know
The place I'd like to stay,
The place I love the best of all?
Dear Court of Christmas gay!

(*At the close of this song the* SPIRIT *comes down from her throne and leads* SANTA *up to a seat beside her while the chorus sings.*)

CHORUS. Yes, we're glad to know
The place he likes to stay,
The place he loves the best of all,
Our Court of Christmas gay!

(*During this song the children's* WISHES *return; they have discarded the ugly cloaks and now appear just like the other* WISHES. *They bring the children's gifts for* SANTA, *and the children come out from their hiding places to receive them.*)

BETTY. Oh, see our Wishes now,—how fair they are!

SPIRIT.
Because they have no selfish thoughts to mar.
If you would have them lovely as you see,
Then let your thoughts sweet and unselfish be!
But aren't you forgetting Santa?

VII. MERRY CHRISTMAS, SANTA

(*Tune—"Swing the shining sickle."*)

CHORUS. Merry Christmas, Santa,
Bringing Christmas cheer,
You're a true friend to us
And we're glad you're here.

CHILDREN. Merry Christmas, Santa,
Greetings glad we sing,
And to show we love you,
Christmas gifts we bring!

(*The children approach* SANTA *and offer their gifts, which he receives with a show of great pleasure as the full chorus repeats the final song.*)

CURTAIN

Who Trimmed the Christmas Tree

A Playlet

By Marie Battelle Schilling

Who Trimmed the Christmas Tree

CHARACTERS

MOTHER.
SALLIE } *her two children.*
BOBBIE }
AN OLD MAN, *a traveling peddler.*

THE SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAYLET

Two little children, on Christmas Eve, are disappointed because the father, having been hurt in an accident, is in a hospital and will not be home for Christmas. There is no money for presents.

An old peddler comes to the door, asking for something to eat and a night's lodging. As the mother is alone with the children, and no near neighbors, she hesitates about letting him stay. But the night is cold and stormy, and finally the entreaties of the children and her own kindness of heart prevail upon her to let him sleep on the floor. After the mother and children have gone to bed, the peddler, appreciating their kindness, opens his pack of toys and trims the Christmas tree. He sleeps through the night but slips away in the early morning leaving the children to their delighted surprise and belief that Santa Claus has really paid them a visit.

The time is Christmas Eve, and early Christmas morning.

Who Trimmed the Christmas Tree

SCENE.—*A room plainly furnished. A door at the back, and a window near door. Door or curtain in side.* MOTHER *is discovered darning stockings at a small table. A Christmas tree decorated with pop-corn, cranberries, gold paper, but no presents. Stockings hung in some conspicuous place. Children stand at window looking out.*

SALLIE. My, but it's snowing hard ! The path that Bobbie and I swept is covered up already. (*Turns around.*) Mother, it doesn't seem a bit like Christmas, with Daddy away, and no Christmas presents.

BOBBIE (*coming over to his* MOTHER; *mournfully*). No Daddy. No Christmas presents.

SAL. Daddy promised me a doll this Christmas; one that would open and shut its eyes.

BOB. And he promised me an engine, like Billy Bond's. You wind it up, and it goes whizzin', just like this.

(*Runs around the room, imitating a steam engine.*)

MOTHER (*laughing, and putting her arms around the children*). But you mustn't complain if you can't have presents this year. Think how glad we ought to be that Daddy is going to get well and can soon come home. Our little house is so nice and warm, and we have plenty to eat (*pointing to tree*), and a Christmas tree, with pop-corn and candy, and after a while we'll light the candles ——

SAL. (*brightly*). I think it looks awful pretty now, Mother. Why, the little Brown children haven't anything. I feel so sorry for Mollie. She told me they never have a Christmas tree. They're so poor. When Mollie stood up in the spelling class this morning I saw her bare toe sticking right out of her shoe.

BOB. But I'd like to have an engine. You wind it up and it goes like this. (*Runs around room again, imitating engine.*

Panting, and out of breath, stops and looks out of window; excitedly.) Oh, Mother, there's Santa Claus! (*Runs to door, and opens it wide.*) Come in, come in, Santa Claus!

(*An* OLD MAN, *with a heavy pack on his back, comes into the room. He wears a high peaked cap and is covered with snow.*)

OLD MAN (*taking off his hat, and speaking to* MOTHER). Lady, it's a mighty bad night. I'm that tired I couldn't go any furder. If you'll give me a bite to eat and let me lay down on the floor for the night, I'll pay you well for it.

(*The children stand looking at* OLD MAN.)

MOTHER (*hesitating, but finally saying*). Well, sit down and rest a little while. I'll get you something to eat, anyway.

(OLD MAN *drops his pack on the floor and sinks wearily into chair.* MOTHER *and* SAL. *go out of room at side exit.* BOB. *walks round the pack several times, eyeing it wistfully; tries to peek in the corners of pack. Finally stops before* OLD MAN.)

BOB. Say, are you Santa Claus?

OLD MAN. No, little feller, I ain't Santy Claus.

BOB. (*in a disappointed tone*). Oh, I did hope you were Santa Claus.

OLD MAN. I didn't come down the chimney, did I?

BOB. I know you didn't, but we haven't any place to get out of our chimney. I s'posed *that* was the reason you came in the door. (*Gets his little chair, and sits down before the* OLD MAN; *looks very sorrowful.*) You see our Daddy got hurt and had to go to the hospital. He can't come home for Christmas; and he had to use his money so much, it's all wore out. So we haven't any Christmas presents.

OLD MAN (*sympathizingly*). Now that's *too* bad, little feller.

BOB. (*still mournful*). I wanted an engine, and Sallie wanted a doll. You wind up my engine (*imitating winding*), and it goes whizzin' round the room, just like this.

(*Runs around the room again.*)

OLD MAN (*laughing*). Say, little feller, Santy Claus ought to bring you an engine.

(MOTHER *and* SAL. *come in room carrying a tray on which are eatables; put tray on little table.*)

MOTHER. Now come and have a bite, but after you get warm and rested a little, I guess you'll have to go on. I haven't any place for you to sleep.

SAL. (*looking out the window*). Oh, it's snowing so hard, and the wind is blowing awful! Mother, I'm glad our cow has a nice warm shed.

BOB. Well, my old Towser is good and warm too. He's asleep out under the kitchen stove.

SAL. (*calling*). Kitty, kitty, kitty! (*Some one outside mews, imitating a cat.*) Yes, she's all right. I was afraid I'd forgotten to call her in. She'd freeze to death if she had to stay out to-night.

(MOTHER *goes to window, and looks out.* OLD MAN, *having finished his meal, takes up his pack, aud starts to put it on his back.*)

BOB. Why, where are you going?

OLD MAN. Just goin' on, little feller.

BOB. (*in surprise*). But if you're not Santa Claus, how can you go on? You haven't any reindeer or sleigh. (*Turns to* MOTHER.) He can't walk, Mother; the snow is too deep.

MOTHER (*who has been looking out the window; turning to* OLD MAN). What is your business, and where are you going?

OLD MAN. I'm a peddler, lady. I sell the things, that I carry in this pack, to the folks at the farmhouses. I was trying to get around before Christmas, but this big storm has put me back.

SAL. (*looking at the* OLD MAN). He looks so tired, Mother; I'm afraid he'll fall down the first thing.

BOB. He can sleep in my trundle bed.

(*The* OLD MAN *stands looking at them, ready to take up his pack.*)

MOTHER (*hesitating; looking out window again*). Well, I don't want to send you out in such a storm as this. You'll have to sleep on the floor. You mustn't smoke or light any matches.

OLD MAN. (*bowing and smiling*). Oh, no, indeed, lady. Thank you, lady. I'll pay you for it.

MOTHER. I don't want any pay. It wouldn't be right to turn an animal out on such a night as this, let alone a human being.

(OLD MAN *sits down again.*)

BOB. I'm glad you're going to stay, Mr. Peddler; but I guess my trundle bed is too little for you.

SAL. We'll put some comforters down here on the floor. It's good and warm here.

(SAL. *runs out side exit and comes back with her* MOTHER, *both carrying quilts and comforters, which they put down on the floor, all talking.*)

MOTHER. Come, children, we must go to bed now.

BOB. Let's dance around the Christmas tree and sing. Come on, Mr. Peddler.

(*Takes hold of* OLD MAN'S *hand and pulls him over to tree. The two children and he dance around the tree.* OLD MAN *very awkward. Children sing some little Christmas song.* MOTHER *laughs heartily. All stop out of breath.*)

MOTHER. Come, children, you must go now. It's getting late; long past your bedtime.

(MOTHER *and children go out side exit calling: "Good-night and Merry Christmas, Mr. Peddler."*)

BOB. (*opening door again*). Say, Mr. Peddler, if Santa Claus comes, tell him not to forget my engine.

(*After he goes out imitates engine. The following scene of the* OLD MAN *trimming the tree must have plenty of action. He must be funny and original, but never rough or coarse; just a kind old man, who will appeal to the children in the audience, as he has to the children on the stage. It might make it more interesting if he would sometimes address the audience; take them into his confidence as it were.*)

OLD MAN (*sitting in chair, looking at tree*). That's a nice little Christmas tree, but it ought to have some presents on it. Such good little children ought to have some Christmas presents. (*Stands a minute thinking; then laughs heartily, turning to audience.*) The old peddler will play Santy Claus and trim

the tree. Won't Bobbie and Sallie be surprised? (*Opens his pack, takes out a lot of cheap toys.*) I don't suppose I can afford it, but Christmas only comes once a year; and they were mighty kind to the old peddler. That there little Bobbie wanted to give me his trundle bed. (*Takes up a doll with long curls.*) Here's Sallie's doll. (*Finds an engine.*) Here's Bobbie's engine. (*Winds it up and puts it down on the floor; laughs.*) He'll make that go all right. (*Begins to hang things on tree.*) Here's a little work-basket to go with Sallie's doll. A performin' monkey; that'll make Bobbie laugh. (*Blows up a balloon, hangs a brightly colored picture book on the tree. Starts to blow on a tin horn; looks around.*) Oh, that won't do; I might wake 'em up. Now, what'll I give that good Mother? (*Takes a cheap but very fancy cap.*) Here's a bewdoor cap; they're stylish. I'll hang it here with a nice new saucepan. I'll put this jolly Santa Claus on the top. (*Walks around the tree admiringly.*) Now, it looks something like a Christmas tree. They'll sure think Santa Claus has been here. (*Takes a silver dollar out of his pocket; looks at it. Finally lays it on the table.*) I guess the old peddler can give Christmas presents if he wants to. (*Goes to window and looks out.*) The storm's about over. I'll lie down and sleep a while, then get up before they come down and go on my tramp. (*Laughs.*) Won't Bobbie and Sallie be s'prised?

(*Lies down and covers up. The lights go down. The stage is dark. Voices outside singing softly, "Holy Night." Although several hours are supposed to elapse, the lights are off only long enough for the* OLD MAN *to get off the stage. To make it more dazzling to the children, the tree may be lighted with electricity. As the lights go up, the children's voices are heard outside the side door. Door opens. Children come in,* BOB. *in pajamas,* SAL. *in nightgown.*)

BOB. Merry Christmas, Mr. Peddler. (*Looks on floor.*) Why, where is Mr. Peddler?

SAL. Oh, Bobbie, look at the Christmas tree.

(*Both children scream with delight.*)

BOB. Santa Claus did come. Sallie, look at my engine.

SAL. And look at my doll. It opens and shuts its eyes.

MOTHER (*coming in door; in a surprised tone*). Why, who did it?

BOB. Santa Claus, 'course.

MOTHER (*looking around the room*). Where's the peddler?

SAL. He's gone.

BOB. Oh, I wish he'd stay to see my engine.

SAL. (*going over to table, picking up silver dollar*). Why, Mother, look at this nice shiny dollar!

BOB. Santa Claus left that for you, Mother.

MOTHER. I guess Santa was here last night. I believe that pretty cap and nice new saucepan are for me.

SAL. Can't we take some of these things over to the little Brown children, Mother? We have so much.

BOB. (*holding on to his engine*). I'll give Jimmie Brown my —my (*looking over tree*) monkey, and—balloon,—and candy, but I can't spare my engine. See it go, Mother.

(*Curtain goes down, with* BOB.'S *engine running over the floor,* SAL. *rocking her new doll, and* MOTHER, *with cap the side of her head, admiring the saucepan.*)

CURTAIN

Hope Foster's Christmas Star

A Christmas Play for Children in Two Acts

By Gladys Chase Gilmore

Hope Foster's Christmas Star

CHARACTERS

DAVID, *a newsboy.*
NAN, *his sister, some years older.*
HOPE FOSTER, *their adopted sister, a cripple.*
MRS. HARDHEART, *their landlady.*
DR. BROWN, *a physician.*
MISS BROWN, *his sister.*
MRS. FOSTER, *Hope's long-lost mother.*
TOM, *the policeman.*
Five carol singers, notably Roger and Raymond.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. The children's boarding-house. Morning of the day before Christmas.
ACT II. Same setting. Christmas Eve.

TIME OF PRESENTATION.—Forty minutes.

Hope Foster's Christmas Star

ACT I

SCENE.—*A room in* MRS. HARDHEART'S *lodging-house, New York City; exits at* R. *and* L. *back of stage, and at* C.; *window at* R. *front of stage; couch under window; at back of stage on* R. *row of hooks for wraps; in foreground, to left, dining-table with three chairs; on* L. *front of stage an open fireplace with mantel; easy chair drawn up before it.*

(*Morning of the day before Christmas.* NAN *is finishing setting the table for breakfast.* HOPE FOSTER *is seated at the table, with crutches at side.*)

NAN (*going to* C. *door*). David! David!

DAVID (*from outside*). Can't you let a feller sleep at all!

NAN (*after a pause during which she puts the finishing touches*). Come! David! Breakfast is ready and this is absolutely the *last* call. You lazy boy! Hope and I are going to begin now and there may not be any left for you!

Enter DAVID, C., *tying his tie as he runs.*

DAVID. Cheer up, Sis—here's little Sambo. You knew you'd fetch me on the feed question! (*To* HOPE.) Mornin', Merry Sunshine! Well, sling the hash, girls!

(*Sits down and starts to eat.*)

HOPE. To-morrow is Christmas, so to-day is my adopted birthday. It was just a year ago to-day that I got lost—I mean that you found me, David. Do you remember?

DAVID. Well, I should smile! (*Eats heartily all the while.*) I couldn't forget that. Say, Hope, what do you and Nan want for Christmas? I'm going to make a thousand dollars to-day, so order anything you like.

NAN. I'd like a big automobile and a fur coat and—and ——

DAVID. Sure thing! And what does Hope want? Don't hesitate—I'm good for anything!

HOPE. I only want one thing really and truly—and that's my mother. (*Wistfully.*) But there! (*Conceals her sadness under a cloak of affectation.*) You might get me a season ticket to the opera and a blue velvet ball gown and a new Victrola!

DAVID. Two, if you like! Say, did you ever hear of a custom of singing Christmas carols as serenades under folks' winders on Christmas eve?

HOPE. Oh, yes! They always did it in England. The boys and girls went in a merry crowd, and though I was too little to go, I've heard them and heard my brother tell of the fun they had.

DAVID. Well, some customers of mine—fellers 'bout my age—are going to do it. They were telling me about it, and I told them they'd better come around in this street and show us what they could do.

HOPE. I had a wonderful dream last night. Do you ever dream, Nan?

NAN. Sometimes. What was your dream, Hope?

(*Knocking at the door at* R. *Enter* MRS. HARDHEART.)

MRS. H. (*gruffly*). Morning. I guess you know what I want. I've come for my rent money. Now, when am I going to get it?

DAVID. I'll bring it to-night—sure, Mrs. Hardheart. Even though I would like to spend it on Christmas things!

MRS. H. Christmas nonsense! You bring me that money to-night or I'll turn you all out, Christmas or no Christmas! You shiftless good-for-nothing! Guess you ought to be mighty glad you even got a chance to live in a decent house for only a dollar a week rent! No other place in *this* city you could get it! I've got to have that dollar to-night and don't you forgit it! (*She shakes him a bit by the shoulder.*)

DAVID. All right. Merry Christmas to you!

NAN. } Merry Christmas, Mrs. Hardheart!
HOPE. }

MRS. H. Merry Christmas, nonsense!

[*Exit* R., *slamming door.*

DAVID. Gee! She might be a bit gentle with my shoulder even if she isn't over the rent! Gorry! The way she takes on over her old dollar—you'd think it was a hundred!

NAN. I don't believe she knows how to be gentle. I wonder if she knows what Christmas means!

HOPE. Maybe we could show her.

NAN. What were we talking about before she came in? Oh,—(*recollecting*) Hope, go on and tell us about your dream.

HOPE (*hesitatingly and dreamily*). I was walking along a dark road when suddenly I heard the sweetest tinkle-tinkle, and there beside me stood the dearest, brightest fairy—just like the kind in that story-book you read to me, David. In her hand she was swinging a very shiny star on a silver ribbon and I asked her what it was. *What* do you s'pose she said?

NAN. } What?
DAVID. }

HOPE. Well, she said: "This is for you, Hope. It is a Merry Christmas star," and she fastened the ribbon around my head so that the star was on my forehead, and, you know, it was just like a searchlight the way it lighted up the road! I must have looked very much puzzled, because she said: "You never saw one before, did you? This has a magic power to show you the way to have a Merry Christmas. It's very easy," she said, "if you only know how. All you have to do is to forget what *you* want and think what other people want and try to make those around you happy." Oh, if you could have heard that fairy's voice when she said that! It was like the *sweetest* music you ever heard!

NAN. That *is* a wonderful dream, Hope.

DAVID. Gee! And it's true if you just think it over.

NAN. David, it's time for you to go.

DAVID. Just so. Where's my cap? (*Hunts about the room, at last locating it.*) Say, you girls are no good on housekeeping if you can't tell a feller where his lid is! (*Puts on his coat while he chatters.*) Now be good girls while I'm away!

[*Exit*, R.

NAN. I must go, too. And I'll try to get back early this noon, dear. [*Exit*, R.

(*With the help of her crutch*, HOPE *gets about and cleans up the room, then she sits down to sew.*)

Enter MRS. H., R.

MRS. H. Did I leave my broom here?

HOPE. I haven't seen it, Mrs. Hardheart. Won't you sit down a bit?

MRS. H. (*still cross but beginning to be mollified*). I hain't got no time to set down. Those two lazy young 'uns leave the tidyin' up to you, do they? They ought to be whipped! That doctor coming to-day?

(*She dusts here and there while she speaks.*)

HOPE. I hope so. He's so good to me. He says my knee is getting along very nicely now, and that I'll soon be just like other little girls. Some day I'll just forget this old crutch.

MRS. H. What about the blow you got when your head struck? Has your memory ever come back to you? Queer thing, *I* think.

HOPE. Yes, my memory's better too. It's been a year now, you see, and gradually I can remember more and more about my other life, just before the accident happened. Dr. Brown says he's had other cases but that mine is the most successful.

MRS. H. How *did* it happen? Why didn't they come back for you?

HOPE. Well, it was this way; my mother had gone away and I was out riding with my nurse. When we were going round a corner the auto jerked, and as I was leaning 'way out, I was thrown out, but the nurse was talking to the chauffeur and never missed me, I guess. Then, you see, when I fell I hurt my head and knee and David happened to be near by selling papers, so he came and picked me up.

MRS. H. Where'd he get hold of this Dr. Brown?

HOPE. Why, you see, Dr. Brown has a place near where the accident happened, where they take care of poor sick people free, and David took me right in there.

MRS. H. (*her heart somewhat softened*). He seems to take a powerful interest in a little girl like you. He must be fond of you.

HOPE. He's done a great deal for me—all he can, I guess. There's one thing he can't do, and it's what I want most in the world, though. (*She is near crying.*)

MRS. H. What's that?

HOPE. Why, it's just my mother. (*Begins to cry.*) Oh, I want to see—my mother!

MRS. H. (*completely softened*). There! There! Don't cry!

HOPE (*controlling herself*). I mustn't forget about the

Christmas star the fairy gave me. (*Quieted now.*) Do *you* ever dream, Mrs. Hardheart?

MRS. H. Can't say 't I do, 'cept for havin' nightmares over my rents.

HOPE. Well, I had the most wonderful dream last night! A fairy gave me a shining star—she tied it on my forehead and she said that it would give me a happy Christmas if I could forget what *I* wanted and try to make other people happy. I guess it's true, and I've got to forget that I want my mother, and you—maybe it would give you a happy Christmas if you could forget what *you* want. I never heard you say you did want anything but your rent—could you forget *that?*

MRS. H. Well, I never thought o' such a thing! Mebbe I'll try it. That *was* quite a dream, Hope. I'll hev to go an' think it over. (*Thoughtfully; then recalling herself abruptly.*) Well, well, time's flying an' me with the halls to sweep, a-sittin' here talkin'. Good-bye. (*She rushes out* R.)

HOPE. Good-bye. (*Goes sighing to the chair in which she has been sitting and resumes sewing. A knock is heard at* R. *door and* DR. BROWN *and* MISS BROWN *enter.*) Come in. Oh, good-morning, Doctor.

DR. B. Good-morning, Hope. This is my sister. She's come to wish you a merry Christmas. (*Takes off overcoat.*)

MISS B. (*shaking* HOPE'S *hand very cordially and holding it during* HOPE'S *reply*). So this is Hope! I'm so glad to meet you for I've heard a great deal about you from the doctor.

HOPE. I've heard about you, too, and I think it's very nice of you to come and see me.

(MISS B. *pats her shoulder.*)

MISS B. Now, while the doctor is doing his work, I'll just look around and don't you bother about me.

(*She takes the bunch of holly from under her arm and arranges it in a vase on the mantel, leaves some packages on the table, and straightens things out generally in the background.*)

DR. B. Well, how's the little girl to-day?

HOPE. Nicely, thank you.

DR. B. (*always encouraging and hearty*). Well, let's try our stunts. Stand right up by the table—that's it. Now try this. (*Puts his foot forward.*) Bend the knee a bit.

HOPE. That hurts a little.

DR. B. Well, try it to the side. (*He does it with her.*) Now in back. Now just stand without a thing and try to bear equal weight on it. Good for you! That's the stuff! Now you can sit down. (*He sits.*) How much can we remember to-day?

HOPE. I was trying just before you came and I can *almost* (*hesitating*) remember where mother had gone when I had my accident. It was—it was—Montreal!

MISS B. (*starting forward in great excitement*). Montreal, Hope!

HOPE. Yes.

MISS B. And you lived in England—in Yorkshire?

HOPE (*gasping*). Yes, yes!

MISS B. In a big place called Blyborough Hall? And you'd come here on a long visit? How strange! (*Making an obvious effort to conceal her excitement.*) Hope, will you please get me a glass of water? I'm very thirsty.

HOPE. Certainly, Miss Brown. [*Exit*, L.

MISS B. (*watching her out of sight, then turning to the doctor with enthusiasm*). George! I believe I can find Hope's mother! The other day at a tea I met a friend of Mrs. Rothschild's named Mrs. Foster who fits the case exactly. She was in deep mourning and when I asked Mrs. Rothschild privately why, she told me that the lady lost her little girl a year ago under such peculiar circumstances. Later Mrs. Foster told me something about it. Oh, oh, I'm *so* glad! But there! She *may* not be her mother, and I mustn't let the child know and raise her hopes for nothing! Oh, let's go over to the Rothschilds' at once!

DR. B. (*rising and putting on overcoat*). No, better not say anything to Hope yet.

HOPE (*entering* L.). Sorry I took so long—I had to let the water run to get it cold.

MISS B. (*restraining her impatience enough to take a sip*). Thank you, dear. It's deliciously cool. We have to go now—and I hope Santa Claus will bring just what you want.

HOPE (*smiling but with an effort*). He can't bring me my real mother, I'm afraid.

MISS B. (*with repressed excitement*). You never can tell what he'll do if you're very good. (*Goes to door.*)

HOPE (*her attention attracted to table*). Oh, Miss Brown, aren't you forgetting your packages?

MISS B. No, Santa Claus left those. Good-bye, dear.

HOPE. Oh, thank you! And I hope you'll have a Merry Christmas, Miss Brown.

DR. B. Good-bye, Hope.

HOPE. Good-bye. Merry Christmas, Doctor.

(*They go out* R. HOPE *sits down in the rocking-chair with her chin in her hand.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as before.* *Time.*—*Christmas eve.*

(HOPE *in the rocking-chair sewing.* NAN *enters* R., *covered with snow and a hat-box under her arm.*)

NAN. Hello, there! (*Bends over* HOPE'S *chair to kiss her.*) Boo! but it's cold and snowy out! How nice to come in where there's a fire! (*Takes off wraps and moves briskly about.*) There, I must start the supper right away. (*Exit,* L., *coming back with a table-cloth which she flings over the table.*) Well, what has happened here to-day?

HOPE. Oh, Mrs. Hardheart came up and, you know, she seemed to be kinder when she left. I told her about my dream.

NAN. Hope, dear, I remembered your dream, and I just thought I'd give Mrs. Hardheart a Christmas present, so I made up a little hat from some things we had in the shop. (*Unties box and brings it to* HOPE.) Want to see it?

HOPE (*peering in*). Oh, how gorgeous! Do call her upstairs now and let me hear what she says!

NAN (*calling out* R. *door*). Mrs. Hardheart! Oh—Mrs. Hardheart!

MRS. H. (*in the distance*). Yes, yes. (*Comes to* R. *door.*)

NAN. Come in a minute—I've got something for you!

(*She backs into the room before* MRS. H., *keeping the hat-box behind her.*)

MRS. H. What is it? My rent?

NAN. No, it's a real Christmas present. I made it all myself!

(*Presents box.*)

MRS. H. (*taking hat out and going to mirror to try it on*). Oh, how lovely! It's simply *elegant!* Now that was real nice of you, Miss Nan. (*Hesitatingly.*) I'll have ter—yes, I'll have ter take off half the rent fer a present to you! Come down in my room and see me some time.

NAN. Oh, thank you!

MRS. H. There! Them pies are burnin'. I left 'em in the oven! (*Hat in hand, rushes out* R.)

NAN. My! but she has changed already. That dream-star of yours, Hope, has magic in it, I guess. (*Exit*, L., *returning at once with plates, knives and forks, etc., with which she sets three places.*) If those customers of David's come, we can give them some of our apples. (*Goes out and brings back covered dishes.*) There, supper's 'most ready. I wonder where David is?

Enter DAVID, R. *Hangs up coat and cap and throws bundle of unbought papers on couch.*

DAVID. Hello, girls. Merry Christmas! Well, well, what's doing?

NAN (*drawing up her chair to table*). Supper mostly. Make any extra money?

DAVID (*strutting and posing*). Well, rather! I'm some little detective, *I* am. Sherlock Holmes is right in my class!

NAN. }
HOPE. } What do you mean?

DAVID. I caught a couple of burglars!

NAN. When was that?

DAVID (*with pretended nonchalance*). To-day, of course. Do you think I'm giving you news a week old! Here it is in the paper. (*Picking paper from couch, reads in deep voice.*) "Mrs. Cornelius Astorbilt's auto stolen. Fifty thousand dollars worth of jewels were in limousine which was standing at curb in front of Tiffany's. One thousand dollars reward offered for information with regard to robbers."

NAN (*much excited but still skeptical*). And what did *you* have to do with it?

DAVID (*drawing up chair to table and eating while he talks*). Well, I was standing at my corner of Twenty-seventh and Fourth Avenue when a big limousine whizzed up to the curb.

NAN. How did you know it was the Astorbilts'?

DAVID. Aw, couldn't I read the C. A. on the door? Besides all us fellers know it. It's a big purple car—you can't miss it. Well, it whizzed up to my curb and one of the guys drivin' it leaned out and bought a paper. I noticed when he reached down into his hip pocket for the change that he didn't have any purple uniform on under his fur coat. Gee! I says to myself, hard luck for Mrs. Astorbilt! She can't afford to dress up her chauffeur any more. And just then it came to me

that maybe this was the car of hers that had stood out in front of Tiffany's. I saw two cops at the corner, and one had a motorcycle. I slides over an' tells them the dope. And off shoots the motor guy on the trail of the big auto.

NAN } (*tremendously excited*). Did he catch them?
HOPE }

DAVID. Search me! The other cop was Tom, a special friend of mine, and after we'd kept our eyes peeled a while and nothin' doin', he says: "I'll go down to station three—they'll shure be brought in there if he gets thim." About then business was rushin' and next I came home.

NAN. Oh, David, I *wish* you'd get the reward!

DAVID (*seating himself again at the table*). Say, Nan, is that all the butter you've got? I could eat that in one mouthful. (*Exit* NAN, L. DAVID *jumps up and gets a box from his coat pocket, a present for* NAN, *which* HOPE *admires silently. When* NAN *returns, they hide it hastily under* DAVID'S *napkin.* DAVID, *with great innocence, transfers box from lap to pocket in sight of audience.*) Well, what's happened here? Have you caught any burglars?

HOPE. No, but I've had callers. Dr. Brown brought his sister. She's perfectly lovely. It's Christmas eve, Nan; can't we open the presents she brought? She said Santa Claus left them. (*Discloses packages on couch beneath cushions.*)

NAN (*opening parcels*). How sweet of her!

HOPE. And the doctor said I was doing splendidly.

DAVID. Hooray!

NAN. And Mrs. Hardheart has reformed!

DAVID (*pretending to faint*). Fan me wid a brick!

NAN. Yes, really, she's almost human now. I brought her a Christmas present, a hat I made, and she seemed really to appreciate it. And then—David, listen to the climax—she's going to take off half of the week's rent—she offered it as a Christmas present!

DAVID. What do you know about that! Hooray for Mrs. Kindheart! (*Dances a jig.*)

NAN. Well, I must clear supper away.

(*Christmas carollers are heard outside, singing "God rest ye, Merry Gentlemen." The children rush to window and listen, applauding the end.*)

DAVID (*raising sash and shouting*). Come on up, fellers!

(NAN *in the meantime bustles into the kitchen and returns with*

a bag of apples. Five urchins enter R., *all bundled up and covered with snow.* DAVID, *to* NAN *and* HOPE.) These are the kids I was tellin' you about. (*To boys.*) This is my sister Nan and my adopted sister, Hope. Say, fellers, that was classy singing! Been around very far?

ROGER. Oh, about ten blocks—it's good fun.

RAYMOND. It's good and cold out, though!

NAN (*passing bag*). Have an apple?

(*All help themselves, with business of saying, "Sure," "You betcha," etc. The children are grouped to* L. *of stage. A knock is heard at* R. *door.*)

DAVID (*crossing to door*). Hullo, who's next?

Enter TOM, *the policeman.*

TOM. Is David Maguire here?

DAVID. Hello, Tom. Open up, old man—come to lead me to Sing Sing?

TOM. Nothing like that! Them guys in the auto were the suspects!

DAVID (*excitedly*). Is that right? The motorcycle cop brought 'em in, did he? Who were they?

TOM. One was Dick the Rat, the other guy they call Gentleman Jim because he's such a slick one—both of 'em old stand-bys at Sing Sing. Gentleman Jim it was that worked the getaway. They caught 'em about two hours ago. The other officer was about to land the reward when I stepped up and told the sergeant who you was and that *you* discovered 'em, so he calls up Mrs. Astorbilt and tells her secretary all about it right away. Thinks I to mesilf: It's Christmas eve and the lad won't mind a bit of a Christmas present. So I goes up and sees the secretary mesilf to hurry up matters a little. And here it is—(*drawing envelope from breast pocket*) a check for a thousand dollars for David Maguire!

(DAVID *is first incredulous, then overjoyed. The girls jump up and down for joy. The carollers swarm around him, slapping him on the shoulder and exclaiming, "Good work, Dave!" "That's the boy!" "Some Sherlock!"*)

DAVID (*to* TOM). Say, Tom, you take half of it!

TOM (*with pretended gruffness*). Not a cent! Didn't you know it was against the law to bribe an officer?

DAVID. Aw, Tom!

TOM. Well, I'm off—got to go back to my beat. Merry Christmas to everybody! [*Exit*, R.

ROGER (*starting with the other boys toward the door*). Say, fellers, three cheers for Dave the Detective! Rah! Rah! Rah!

(*He leads in the cheers and they all troop out, the children shouting, "Merry Christmas," and "Same to you," back and forth.*)

DAVID. Well, didn't I tell you I'd make a million or so! Some class!

NAN. It seems almost too good to be true. My! what a Christmas we'll have!

(*A knock is heard at the door at* R., *and* MRS. H. *enters at once with* MISS B., *who, however, remains at the door with her hand on the knob as if waiting to throw it open.*)

MRS. H. Nan, here's Miss Brown come to see yer.

NAN. How do you do?

MISS B. I'm glad to meet you, Nan. (*Smiles mysteriously.*) May I bring in a *big* Christmas present for Hope?

NAN. Certainly.

(MISS B. *opens the door and* MRS. FOSTER *enters.* HOPE *stands up and gasps; then, dropping her crutches, runs to her mother's arms.*)

HOPE. Mother!

MRS. F. Hope!

NAN (*overjoyed*). It's Hope's mother—oh, oh, oh!

DAVID (*lifting crutch*). Look here—Hope has forgotten her crutch! Oh, I say!

MISS B. Why, see! She's standing alone!

HOPE (*still in her mother's arms but standing manifestly on her own feet*). I told you I would some day.

NAN (*to* MISS B.). But how did you find Hope's mother? Do sit down, everybody, and let's hear all about it!

MRS. F. No, you must all come right over to *my* house to spend Christmas!

CURTAIN

Bonnie's Christmas Eve

A Dramatic Sketch in One Act

By Jay Clay Powers and Irene M. Childs

Bonnie's Christmas Eve

CHARACTERS

PHILIP GRAYDON, *a recluse.*
ROBERT CUMMINS, *officer of the Northwest Mounted Police.*
FRANCOIS, *a French-Canadian trapper.*
BONNIE, *Graydon's little daughter.*

NOTE.—Nishwa, an old Indian squaw, is talked of but does not appear.

TIME.—Christmas Eve. PLACE.—The far Northwest.

(*"Bonnie's Christmas Eve," was given its initial production at the Grand Opera House, San Antonio, Texas, on the night of December 11, 1914, with the following*)

ORIGINAL CAST

PHILIP GRAYDON, *a recluse* - - *Claude A. Hargis.*
ROBERT CUMMINS, *officer of the Northwest Mounted Police* - - *Herbert Maddox.*
FRANCOIS, *a French-Canadian trapper,* - - - - - - - - *Gerard Van Etten.*
BONNIE, *Graydon's little daughter, Miss Catherine Childs.*

Professional and Moving Picture rights reserved.

Bonnie's Christmas Eve

SCENE.—*Interior of log house. Rustic furnishings, in good taste. Table at* C. *with chairs* R. *and* L. *of table. Row of pegs (practical) on wall* R. *Fireplace* R. *with glowing coals. Door back* C. *swings from* L. *to* R. *on to stage. At* R. *of this door is a curtained clothes-closet (practical). At* L. *of this door is a window with window-shade (practical). Near this window is a dining-room table. At* L. 2 E. *is another door (open). On dining-room table there is a lighted lamp turned low. A large and a small stocking hanging from mantel.* BONNIE'S *kimono on chair* L. *of table. Bible on center-table. Armchair,* R. *Lights low.*

(*After rise of curtain,* PHILIP GRAYDON, *carrying bundles of Christmas presents, enters door* B. C. *He places bundles on dining-room table; goes to fireplace and warms hands. Then to lamp on table and turns it up. Full lights.* GRAY. *crosses to door* L.; *looks off through open door.*)

GRAY. Nishwa has got the baby to sleep. How sweet she looks in her little bed. (*To* C.) Heavenly Father, for her sake lead me not into such sore temptation again as has confronted me this day. (*Crosses to* R., *hangs hat and coat on pegs; removes cartridge-belt with holster in which there is a pistol and hangs them on pegs. Goes to fireplace; sees stockings hanging from mantel.*) Bonnie's and Nishwa's stockings waiting for Santa to fill them. No matter how I feel, Bonnie shall have her Christmas.

(*Goes to table* L.; *begins unwrapping parcels.*)

BONNIE (*off* L.). Daddy!

GRAY. (*covering parcels with table-cover*). She is awake.

BONNIE (*off*). Is it you, Daddy?

GRAY. Yes, my darling. (BONNIE, *in nightgown, enters* L.) Daddy is sorry you are awake. (*Lifts her up and kisses her.*) Here, slip into your kimono so you won't take cold.

(*Holds kimono for her.*)

BONNIE. I wasn't really asleep. I was just 'tendin' like it to fool Nishwa. She was so sleepy herself she was noddin'. Have you seen anything of Santa Claus?

GRAY. (*sitting* L., *with* BONNIE *on his lap*). Yes, indeed, I met him about a mile from here.

BONNIE. Did he have dolls and toys?

GRAY. Heaps of them.

BONNIE. Will he come to our house?

GRAY. He said: "As soon as Bonnie is fast asleep I will come down your chimney and leave her some pretty things."

BONNIE. And leave Nishwa some, too?

GRAY. Yes, of course. He wouldn't forget Nishwa. Now, won't you run and climb into your nice little bed? Nishwa is asleep like Santa wants her to be.

BONNIE. If I don't go to sleep will he leave all the presents to Nishwa?

GRAY. Yes. Listen! I think I hear him coming! You'd better run to bed, quickly. . . . Don't you hear him?

BONNIE. Oh, no. That isn't Santa, that's only Nishwa snoring.

GRAY. Won't you go to bed for Daddy?

BONNIE. I haven't said, "Now I lay me."

GRAY. That's right.

BONNIE (*kneeling at* GRAY.'S *knee*). Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep; if I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. God bless Mama up in heaven, Daddy down here, Nishwa, and everybody,—and make me a good little girl. For Jesus' sake. Amen. (*Rises; kisses* GRAY.) Good-night, Daddy! (*To door.*)

GRAY. Good-night, my precious.

BONNIE. Please don't shut this door.

GRAY. I won't. (BONNIE *exits* L.) "God bless Mama up in heaven"—yes, she is in heaven. A merciful God has pardoned her sin, knowing how bitterly she lived to repent it. But why has He permitted her betrayer to cross my path to-day? (*Knocking at door* B. C.) Who can that be? (*Goes to door.*) Who's there?

FRANCOIS (*outside*). Francois!

GRAY. (*opening door*). Come in, Francois! (FRAN. *enters.*) Go to the fire and warm yourself!

FRAN. (*warming hands*). Ah, ze fire eet ees gude.

BONNIE (*appearing in door* L.). 'Tain't nobody but old Francois. I thought it was Santa.

FRAN. Oui, Mam'selle, Santa he make ze reindeer, ze many, many reindeer go so fast zat ze leetle bells zey go teenkle, teenkle! I tink 'e come here pretty queeck, eef you make shut your eyes and go to sleep.

BONNIE. All right, Francois,—good-night!

FRAN. Bon nuit, Mam'selle. (*Throws kiss.* BONNIE *exits* L. *Pause.* FRAN.'S *whole demeanor changes. When next he speaks his voice is tense with repressed excitement.*) You not afraid to stay here so long?

GRAY. I don't understand what you mean.

FRAN. You not afraid?

GRAY. Afraid of what?

FRAN. Zat zey come to arrest you.

GRAY. What are you driving at, Francois? Why should anybody want to arrest me?

FRAN. Zat strange man you meet in town to-day ——

GRAY. Yes, yes?

FRAN. And quarrel ——

GRAY. Yes?

FRAN. Zey have found heem dead, down by ze creek!

GRAY. God!

FRAN. Ze people say: "Meestair Graydon quarrel wif zis man, and lay een wait, and keel heem."

GRAY. I quarreled with him, yes. But, as God is my judge, I did him no harm.

FRAN. 'E ees murdaired,—stabbed through ze heart. You better go away, queeck!

GRAY. (*putting hands on* FRAN.'S *shoulders*). Look me in the eyes, Francois! Do you believe I killed that man?

FRAN. (*shrugging shoulders*). Anyhow, you better go. Ze boys een town no like you vairy well. Zey might take ze notion to (*intimating slipping noose over head*) handle you rough. . . . You been gude to my boy, Pierre, when heem so seek. Francois nevair forget zat. Francois beg you to go, queeck!

GRAY. You are right. I am unpopular in the town. Since coming here to live, my natural shrinking from all society has been mistaken for false pride. Excitement and mean whiskey might cause the boys to do a thing to-night that they'd regret. I'll take your advice, and go.

FRAN. Gude, vairy gude.

GRAY. I'll leave Bonnie here with Nishwa, and go to Indian Joe's dug-out. He is in town to-night, drunk as usual. I will stay there until you bring me further word.

FRAN. Gude. I weel go to town, pretty queeck, and breeng ze news to you at Zhoe's. [*Exit*, B. C.

GRAY. I thought I had already had my share of trouble.

(*Goes to pegs at* R., *takes down hat and coat and puts them on. Reaches for pistol-belt, when* BONNIE *calls.*)

BONNIE (*off* L.). Daddy!

GRAY. Yes? (*Crosses to door* L.) Talking in her sleep. Dreaming of Santa and the things he will bring on the morrow. Oh, that we all might be as little children, and never grow up! (*To table* L.) You little darling, you shall not be disappointed. Daddy will fill the stockings before he goes. (*Noise off* B. C.) What was that!

(*Goes cautiously to door* B. C. *The door opens slowly from without.* GRAY. *conceals himself behind curtains of clothes-closet.* ROBERT CUMMINS, *pistol in hand, enters warily. Glances hastily around room. Goes to door* L.)

CUM. Nobody in there but the child and the squaw. That French-Canuck evidently told us the truth. (*Goes to* C.; *points to cartridge belt on pegs.*) His gun is there. He didn't take it to town with him. That explains why he stabbed his man. He has not yet returned, else he would have secured his gun. (*Goes to door* B. C.) He hasn't been here. Take the Canuck with you as guide, and all of you go to Indian Joe's dug-out. He may have gone there.

VOICE (*outside*). What are you going to do?

CUM. I'll wait here. He may return.

VOICE (*outside*). All right. Get a move on you, Francois!

(CUM. *closes door* B. C. BONNIE *appears, sleepily, door* L.)

BONNIE. Are you Mr. Santa Claus?

CUM. (*starting*). Why—why, no, I'm not.

BONNIE. Well, then, who are you?

CUM. Robert Cummins, ma'am, officer of his Majesty's mounted police. And, if I may be so bold as to inquire, who are you?

BONNIE. My name is Barbara Graydon. Daddy and everybody calls me Bonnie, though. I like Bonnie best, don't you?

CUM. Why, yes, I believe I do.

BONNIE. Did you come in without knocking?

CUM. I'm afraid I did.

BONNIE. Maybe you didn't never have nobody to teach you manners. Where is my Daddy?

CUM. That is what I should like to know. When did you last see him?

BONNIE. He was here with Francois when I went to bed.

CUM. (*to himself*). Ah, then the Canuck was lying after all. He came to warn Graydon that the murder had been discovered and that the posse was forming. In his hurry to get away Graydon forgot his gun.

BONNIE. Daddy hasn't got a gun. He's got a sure nuff pistol, though. I mustn't play with it. 'Cause it might go off. Won't you sit down?

CUM. (*sitting* R.). Thank you.

BONNIE (*sitting* L.). Now, tell me a story about an Indian and a gun and a dog.

CUM. I don't remember any.

BONNIE. Gee! Daddy knows lots of nice stories. His are better than the ones in books.

CUM. What book is that on the table?

BONNIE. That's the Bible. Didn't you never read it?

CUM. A little,—a long time ago.

BONNIE. I can read the twenty-third Psalm.

CUM. Is that so? Who taught you?

BONNIE. My mama did,—just before she went to heaven. Her body is buried on the hill out there (*pointing toward window*), but she's an angel and lives away up in the sky with Jesus and God. (*Yawns, sleepily.*)

CUM. It's too late for you to be up. Run along to bed. I'll wait for your daddy.

BONNIE. That wouldn't be nice, 'cause you're company. I speck Daddy just went outside to tell Santa that I'm asleep.

CUM. But you're not asleep.

BONNIE. I'll go to bed if you'll play just one game of blind man's buff with me.

CUM. It's too late.

BONNIE. No 'tisn't.

CUM. Yes, it is.

BONNIE. I'll bet you haven't got a handkerchief.

CUM. (*producing bandanna*). You lose.

BONNIE. Now, tie it over my eyes, tight, so I can't see.

CUM. Will you go to bed then?

BONNIE. I speck so. (CUM. *blindfolds her.*) That's right. Now, put me down and turn me around three times. Then don't let me catch you,—'cause if I catch you, you are it.

CUM. Well, here goes! (*Turns her around.*) One!—Two!—Three!

(*Ad lib. business back of center table. He lets* BONNIE *catch him.*)

BONNIE. It's Mr. Cummins.

CUM. Right you are! (*Removes bandanna from her eyes.*) Now, run along to bed.

BONNIE. That ain't fair. You've got to be it once, Mr. Cummins.

CUM. No, I can't.

BONNIE. Then I won't like you, and I won't go to bed, either. Be it just once, Mr. Cummins. Please, please, please.

CUM. Will you promise to go straight off to bed if I'll be it just once?

BONNIE. Yes. Honest to goodness I will.

CUM. All right, then, I'll be it, just once. (*Ties handkerchief over eyes.*) Are you ready?

BONNIE. Nope. I've got to turn you around three times first. (*Turns him around.*) One!—Two!—Three! You can't catch me!

(*Tiptoes to door,* L., *and exit. Ad lib. business on the part of* CUM. GRAY. *steals from closet and goes softly to pegs at* R. *He seizes butt of pistol and jerks pistol from holster, causing cartridge-belt to fall to floor.* CUM., *who is* L. C., *turns quickly at the sound and jerks bandanna from his eyes, and reaches for his gun.*)

GRAY. (*covering* CUM.). Don't draw!

CUM. You've got the drop on me. Come take my gun. (GRAY. *disarms* CUM.) Well?

GRAY. Cummins, I'm not guilty of that man's murder.

CUM. Then why not go, quietly, with me?

GRAY. I can make no defense. All I ask of you is: when once I have put myself beyond your reach, try to find the real assassin.

BONNIE (*at door*, L.). Daddy, you've broke up the game.
GRAY. Yes, yes, Bonnie, go to bed, now, and to sleep.
BONNIE. Good-night, Mr. Blind-man !
CUM. (*smiling*). Good-night, Bonnie ! [*Exit* BONNIE, L.
BONNIE (*off*). Good-night, Daddy !
GRAY. Good-night, darling ! (*Softly.*) And good-bye.

(*Stamping of feet is heard off* B. C.)

CUM. The posse has returned !
GRAY. Cummins, sit down in that chair. (CUM. *sits* L. *of table.*) I shall hide behind those curtains and shall keep you covered. When they knock tell them to come in, but don't rise from your seat. Send them on to town on some fool's errand. If you make the slightest move to betray me I'll shoot you. Do you understand ?
CUM. Perfectly. (*Knock at* B. C.) Come in ! (FRAN. *enters ; comes down* L.) Well, what do you want ?
FRAN. We go to Indian Zhoe's. We knock on ze door. Nobody comes. We knock some more. Steel, nobody. We break down ze door. We rush een. Indian Zhoe, he lays drunk on ze floor. By heem many, many kind of money. By heem, too, a gold watch. We roll heem ovair and find hees hunting-knife. Eet ees covaired wif blood. Zhoe eet ees what keeled ze man down by ze creek !
GRAY. (*stepping out*). Thank God !

(CUM. *rises.*)

FRAN. What zees mean ?
CUM. It means that your news has relieved Mr. Graydon and me of a load of suspense.
GRAY. Are they taking Joe to town ?
FRAN. No, zey have took ze short cut wif Zhoe. (*Intimates by gesture that they hanged him.*) Eet ees late. I must go. My boy, Pierre, heem steel not so vairy well. Au revoir, messieurs !
GRAY. } Good-night ! [*Exit*, FRAN.
CUM. }
CUM. So must I be going. I hope there are no hard feelings ?

(*Extends hand.*)

GRAY. None whatever.

(*They shake hands.* CUM. *exits.* GRAY. *takes stockings from mantel and fills them from parcels, and replaces stockings at mantel. Turns lamp light down. Lights down. Goes to window at* L. C., *and runs up shade. Looks out into the moonlight as though at his wife's grave. Pulls down shade. Goes to fireplace. Sits in armchair. Breaks down.*)

SLOW CURTAIN

The First Christmas

In Tableaux and Pantomime

Arranged by
Mary Eleanor Rogers, Emerson College of Oratory, 1909
and
Frederick Leighton Fay, Gordon Bible College, 1916

The First Christmas

CHARACTERS

MARY.
JOSEPH.
ELIZABETH.
SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.
FIVE SHEPHERDS.
TWO ANGELS.

COSTUMES

MARY, JOSEPH, ELIZABETH, and SHEPHERDS wear Oriental, loose-flowing garments, with turban-like head-gear. Shepherds carry crooks. ANGELS are loosely draped in light sheets, hair hanging. SPIRIT OF PROPHECY wrapped in white sheet with white turban on head, draped in Oriental effect.

NOTE

In presenting these tableaux, the room should be darkened and, if possible, electric footlights used. An added effect can be obtained if light-green bulbs are used in all tableaux except Nos. 2, 3 and 4. In 6 and 7 a few transparent bulbs may be added.

The First Christmas

TABLEAU I.—The Spirit of Prophecy

(*Curtain up.*)

Reader. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

(*Curtain down.*)

TABLEAU II.—Appearance of Angel to Joseph

(*Curtain up.* Joseph *is seated on low stool, looking down, in attitude of meditation. As the* Reader *says, "Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream," the* First Angel *enters from side.*)

READER. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: and she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins. Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel: and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and she brought forth a son: and he called his name Jesus."

(*Curtain.*)

(*Quartette: "Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken."*)

TABLEAU III.—ANNUNCIATION TO MARY

(*Curtain up.* MARY *stands with bowed head, hands clasped and dropped in front, during* READER'S *part. As* FIRST ANGEL *appears,* MARY *shows surprise, then slowly kneels.*)

READER. "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel said unto her,

ANGEL. "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

MARY (*with arms outstretched*). "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word."

(*Curtain.*)

TABLEAU IV.—Mary's Visit to Elizabeth

(*Curtain up.* Elizabeth *standing. As* Reader *says, "and entered into the house,"* Mary *enters.* Elizabeth *gives Oriental salute;* Mary *responds.*)

Reader. "And Mary arose in these days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah: and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth."

Enter Mary.

Elizabeth. "Blessed art thou among women: and whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me."

Mary. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things: and holy is his name. And his mercy is unto generations and generations on them that fear him. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart. He hath put down princes from their thrones, and hath exalted them of low degree. The hungry he hath filled with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath given help to Israel his servant, that he might remember mercy (as he spoke unto our fathers) toward Abraham and his seed for ever."

Reader. "And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned unto her own house."

(*Curtain.*)

(*Quartette: "Holy Night."*)

TABLEAU V.—Stable Scene

(*Curtain up at cue. Lights should be rather dim here. In center of stage is a rough manger with straw and hay showing over edges, and scattered over floor.* Mary *is seated on small stool, and* Joseph *kneeling on floor, one on each side of manger, looking in. A large electric light bulb concealed in manger throws light into faces of the two as their heads are above. If not convenient to use regular*

electric light, stand a pocket flash-light on end so fixed that it will show continuously during tableau.) .

READER. "Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David: to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him. (*Curtain up.*) And it came to pass, while they were there, that she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

(*Curtain down. Repeat verse of "Holy Night," very softly.*)

(*Quartette: "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night."*)

TABLEAU VI.—SHEPHERD SCENE

(*Curtain up. Four, or five, if possible, shepherds with staves, grouped naturally on stage. As* SECOND ANGEL *appears, shepherds step back in fear, then kneel and cover faces with arms. For the angelic chorus, a group of young ladies sing the air, or a double quartette the parts, in another room.*)

READER. "And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the fields and keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them and the glory of the Lord shone around about them: and they were sore afraid."

SECOND ANGEL (*appearing*). "Fear not, for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people; for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger."

READER. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying:

(*Quartette: "Glory to God in the Highest."*)

Vivace.
FREDERIC L. FAY.
Glo - ry to God in the high - est; Glo - ry to God!
Glo - ry to God! Glo - ry to God in the
rit.
high - est; Peace, peace on earth, Good - will to men.

(*Curtain down.*)

(*Quartette: "O Little Town of Bethlehem."*)

TABLEAU VII.—SHEPHERD SCENE (*continued*)

(*Curtain up. Shepherds standing. After the speech of* FIRST SHEPHERD, *they walk off by twos, with one following behind.*)

FIRST SHEPHERD. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

(*Curtain down.*)

(*Quartette: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear."*)

TABLEAU VIII.—Adoration of Shepherds

(*Curtain up. Stage setting as in No. 5.* Mary *seated near cradle;* Joseph *standing at head. Shepherds grouped, some standing, some kneeling, but all in attitude of adoration.*)

Reader. "And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger."

(*Quartette: "O Come All Ye Faithful." After first verse, curtain down, quartette continuing.*)

FINAL TABLEAU

A—Angels. M—Mary. J—Joseph.
S—Shepherds. E—Elizabeth. P—Spirit of Prophecy.

(*Large white cross in background,* c. *Characters grouped as per diagram. An angel stands on either side of cross, with arms extended up and front, in attitude of benediction. Other characters are bowed and kneeling in adoration, facing cross. As curtain rises, quartette sings: "Take My Life and Let It Be." Have spotlight aimed at cross, but covered. About half through the singing, gradually uncover so that the cross grows brighter and brighter, shedding a diffused light over the others. If footlights are used they should be green. Have spotlight ready. Spotlight may be formed by rolling up cardboard and placing electric bulb inside; or a shoe-box with hole cut in end can be substituted.*)

(*Curtain down.*)

Santa Claus' Frolics

An Entertainment for Christmas

By George M. Baker

COPYRIGHT, 1872, BY GEORGE M. BAKER.
COPYRIGHT, 1900, BY EMILY F. BAKER (*In renewal*).
COPYRIGHT, 1914, BY EMILY F. BAKER (*In extension*).

"A BAKER'S DOZEN"

Santa Claus' Frolics

SCENE.—*The rising of the curtain discloses room, with a fireplace,* C., *on either side or above which are hung stockings of various sizes, from the baby's little sock to Bridget's long and broad red, blue, or black hose. On the right of the fireplace is the Christmas tree, hidden by a curtain, which is so arranged that it may be easily removed; or, if double parlors are used, or the entertainment is given in a hall or vestry, the tree can be placed in one corner of the audience-room, and while the attention of the auditors is diverted by the entertainment in the other room, or upon the platform, the tree can be lighted. Six or eight children in the scene, arrayed in night dresses and caps, with lighted candles in their hands, moving about, and occasionally looking up chimney.*

(*Song.—Air, "We're all Noddin'."*)

GIRLS.

We're all waiting, wait, wait, waiting,
We're all waiting for Santa Claus to come.
To catch him we're waiting; he'll surely be here;
The moments fly quickly, and midnight draws near.

ALL.

We're all waiting, wait, wait, waiting,
We're all waiting for Santa Claus to come.

BOYS.

We're all freezing, freeze, freeze, freezing,
We're all freezing, here, waiting in the cold;
For Santa to bring us our presents we wait;
Come, hurry, old fellow; 'tis really quite late.

ALL.

We're all freezing, freeze, freeze, freezing,
We're all freezing, here, waiting in the cold.

GIRLS.
We're all nodding, nod, nod, nodding,
We're all nodding, and dropping off to sleep;
To our warm little beds 'tis time we should go;
Come, hurry, good Santa; pray don't be so slow.

ALL.
For we're all nodding, nod, nod, nodding,
For we're all nodding, and dropping off to sleep.

BOYS.
We're all yawning, yaw, yaw, yawning,
We're all yawning; so let's go off to bed.

GIRLS.
To stay any longer we're surely unwise;
We'll wait for the daylight to open our eyes.

ALL.
For we're all yawning, yaw, yaw, yawning,
We're all yawning, and going off to bed.
[*Exeunt*, R. *and* L., *repeating the last two lines.*

(SANTA CLAUS *peeps out from chimney, then enters. Costume, rubber boots, with pants tucked into them; heavy fur coat, with red comforter tied about it; red comforter about his neck; peaked fur cap; long gray hair and beard; very red face; strapped to his back a large basket filled with toys.*)

SANTA (*looking* R. *and* L.).
Ho, ho, my little rogues. You set a trap
To catch me napping; *now* who takes the nap?
I'm an old schemer; even your sharp eyes
Could never find me in this queer disguise.
Dream on, my darlings, while I treasures heap.
Ho, ho! to fill your *hose* while you're asleep.
Year after year, I drop in on the sly,
Through chimneys made for me so broad and high;
To pop down them is made my cheerful duty;
It *suits* me too—sometimes, almost too *sooty*.

(*Takes basket off back.*)

Let's see: what year is this? why bless my eyes,
It's (*current date*).—Good Gracious! how time flies!

And children multiply so fast, 'tis clear,
A partner I must have another year.
I'm really getting old. This wrinkled phiz
Of good old age a striking symbol is.
And yet I'm strong, can frolic, dance, or play
With young folks yet for many a Christmas day.
So I'll not grumble; while I can, I'll strive
To let my boys and girls know I'm alive.
What though my hair is gray, my heart is young,
And green as Christmas boughs around me hung.

(*Song.—Santa Claus. Air, "Captain Jinks."*)

I'm Santa Claus, the Christmas king,
And every year I gayly sing,
Ho, boys and girls, to you I bring
Such lots of Christmas Presents;
A clipper sled, for merry Ned,
For merry Ned, for merry Ned,
A waxen doll, for pretty Poll,
You'll find among my treasures.

(*Spoken.*) But, bless you, I don't sing very loud, for I know that "Little pitchers have big ears," and I wouldn't have them hear me for the world. Ah, many and many a time I've heard a soft voice in the middle of the night cry out, "Who's there?" Ah, ha! Then I creep about softly, and sing very low,—

I'm Santa Claus, etc.

The boys and girls in me delight,
In me delight, in me delight;
They hang their stockings in the night
To wait my midnight coming.
With generous store I fill them all,
I fill them all, I fill them all;
With generous store I fill them all,
And creep off in the morning.

(*Spoken.*) For, bless the dear little rogues, they're only half asleep. Wouldn't they like to catch me! But no, no, I'm away up the chimney, and when morning comes I peep in, and hear them cry, "Why, who has been here, and left these beautiful presents?" Ah, ha! then I sing,—

Why, Santa Claus, the Christmas king,
Who every year doth gayly sing, etc.

(*Children sing outside.*)

We're all dreaming, dream, dream, dreaming,
We're all dreaming that Santa Claus has come.

SANTA.

Dream on, my darlings, unto each of you
Morn shall bring joy; your dreams shall all be true.
Here are the stockings; bless me, what a row!
Little and big, they make a wondrous show.

(*As he speaks he fills stockings.*)

First comes the baby's; what a tiny thing!
'Twill just hold a rattle and a rubber ring;
This is a girl's, so very neat and small;
I'll stuff it with candy, and a pretty doll.
Ah! here's a boy's. It's very strong and blue.
A nice new pair of skates, my lad, for you;
Another girl's. What can I find to please her?
Ah, here's a tea set; don't think that's a *teaser*.
Another boy's! Ho, this will never do,—
Hole in the heel; a present would drop through;
A ball of yarn will make him wiser grow;
'Twill mend his stocking and his habits too.
What monster's this? It must be Bridget's, sure;
'Twould hold all I have brought, I fear much more.
A nice new gingham dress—a good warm shawl—
Don't fill it—then here goes a waterfall.
And now I'm off. (*Sees audience.*) Hallo! whom have we here?
I really am found out; that's very clear.
Now don't expose me, for I did not mean
Upon my annual visit to be seen.
If you are all my children, 'tis not fair
To tell my secrets even to the air;
So keep them close; don't whisper I've been here;
And shut your eyes; I'm going to disappear.
With "Merry Christmas" wishes all I greet,
Hoping next year my visit to repeat.

And now good-night—I'm off. Yet ere I go,
A little magic I propose to show.
Shut fast your eyes a minute—one, two, three.
Presto! change! Behold the Christmas tree.

(*The Christmas tree is suddenly disclosed.* SANTA CLAUS *approaches it, and distributes presents.*)

CURTAIN

The Merry Christmas of the Old Woman Who Lived In Her Shoe

An Entertainment for Christmas

By George M. Baker

COPYRIGHT, 1874, BY GEORGE M. BAKER.
COPYRIGHT, 1902, BY EMILY F. BAKER (*In renewal*).
COPYRIGHT, 1916, BY EMILY F. BAKER (*In extension*).

"THE EXHIBITION DRAMA"

THE MERRY CHRISTMAS

OF THE

OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE.

CHARACTERS.

THE OLD WOMAN who lived in a Shoe.
SANTA CLAUS, disguised as a Beggar.
Ten or twelve CHILDREN, Boys and Girls of various ages.

SCENE. — *The exterior of "Copper Toe Shoe House," which is set at back of platform.*

Chorus (invisible); air, "Revolutionary Tea" (p. 194, "Golden Wreath").

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe;
Of children she had a score:
So many had she, to know what to do
Was a question which puzzled her sore.

(*Head of* CHILD *appears at* 1.)

To some she gave broth without any bread;
But never contented were they,
Till she whipped them all soundly, and put them to bed,

And then very happy were they,
And then very happy were they.

(*Head appears at* 2.)

"Now, mother, dear mother," the young ones would cry,
As they dropped off with a nod,
"To train up a child in the way to go,
O mother, dear, ne'er spare the rod.

(CHILD'S *head appears at* 3.)

For broth without bread is a watery waste;
And never contented are we,
Till with your good stick it is thickened to taste;

(*Three heads appear at* 4.)

And then, oh, how happy are we!
And then, oh, how happy are we!"

Enter OLD WOMAN, R. *Her costume, bodice, quilted petticoat, sugar-loaf hat, high-heeled shoes, and cane.*

O. W. Aha! (*Heads disappear quick.*)
Good gracious! can't I leave the house a minute,
But what a head's at every window in it?
Don't let me see the tip of a single nose;
For, if you do, we'll surely come to blows.
Poor dears! they want the air. Well, that is cheap
And strengthening; for they live on air and sleep.
Food is so high, and work is so unstiddy,
Life's really wearing on this poor old widdy.

FRONT VIEW OF COPPER TOE SHOE HOUSE.

1. Split in the Heel.
2. Patch on the best Corn.
3. Copper Toe.
4. Lookout, or Observatory at top of House.

(*Heads appear, one after the other, as before.*)

Ah me! here's good old Christmas come again.
How can I join in the triumphant strain
Which moves all hearts? I am so old and poor,
With none to aid me from their generous store.
CHILD *at* 1. Mother, I want a drum.
CHILD *at* 2. I want a doll!
CHILD *at* 3. Gimme a sword!
Three CHILDREN *at* 4. Got presents for us all?
O. W. Aha! (*Heads disappear quick.*)
Poor dears! if with the will I had the power,
The choicest Christmas gifts should on them shower.

Song: OLD WOMAN; *air*, "*Comin' through the Rye.*"

If a widdy's with her biddies,
Living in a shoe,
If a widdy's work unstiddies,
What'll widdy do?

(*Heads appear as before.*)

Every mother loves her biddies;
Many a one have I;
But where get gifts to fill their fists,
When I've no gold to buy?

Aha! (*Heads disappear quick.*)

There is a sprite oft comes this night,
Whom children love full well;
But what's his name, and where's his hame,
He does not always tell.

(*Heads appear as before.*)

Lads and lassies know good Santa,
With presents not a few;
Would he were here, my chicks to cheer,
Living in a shoe!

Aha! (*Heads disappear.*)
Well, I'll get in, and make the children warm.
Tucked in their beds, they're always safe from harm.
And in their dreams, perhaps, such gifts will rise
As wakeful, wretched poverty denies.

(*Disappears behind shoe.*)

Enter cautiously, R., SANTA CLAUS; *his fabled dress is hidden by a long domino, or "waterproof;" he has, swung about his neck, a tin kitchen, on which he grinds an imaginary accompaniment to his song.*

Santa. "You'd scarce expect one of my age"—
For gray hair is the symbol of the sage—
To play at "hide-and-seek," to your surprise.
Here's honest Santa Claus, in rough disguise.
But 'tis all right, as I will quick explain,
For I've a mystic project "on the brain."
I've dropped down chimneys all this blessed night,
Where warmth and comfort join to give delight;
I've filled the stockings of the merry elves,
Who, to fond parents, are rich gifts themselves;
And now I've come, resolved to make a show
In that old mansion with the copper toe,
Where dwells a dame, with children great and small,
Enough to stock a school, or crowd a hall.

If they are worthy of our kind regard,
Christmas shall bring to them a rich reward.
So I have donned for once a meaner dress,
To personate a beggar in distress.
If to my wants they lend a listening ear,
The rough old shoe shall glow with Christmas cheer:
If they are rude, and turn me from the door,
Presto! I vanish, and return no more.

Song: SANTA CLAUS; *air*, "*Them blessed Roomatics.*"

My name's Johnny Schmoker, and I am no joker;
I don't in my pockets no greenbacks perceive.
For, what with high dressing in fashions distressing,
I can't with a morsel my hunger relieve.
My stomach so tender, that aches there engender;
The whole blessed day I am crying out, "Oh!"
Drat these grand fashions! they wakens my passions,
A-nippin' and gnawin' my poor stomach so!

(*Heads appear as before.*)

I've had the lumbager, dyspepsy, and ager,
With tight-fitting veskits and pantaloons too;
Highsterics and swimins, delirious trimins,
St. Vestris's dance, and the tick dolly-oo.
But not the whole gettin', one's body tight fits in,
Is noffin' to this, which is drefful. Oh, oh!
Drat these grand fashions! they wakens my passions,
A-nippin' and gnawin' my poor stomach so!

(*Heads disappear.*)

Now, there's a touching song to move the heart,
Hark! what's that? I thought I heard them start.

Song: CHILDREN, *outside; air, "Oh, dear, what can the matter be?"*

Oh, dear, what can the matter be?
Dear, dear, what can the matter be?
Oh, dear, what can the matter be?
Somebody's groaning out there!

A hungry old beggar has come here to tease us,
By grinding an organ he knows will not please us.
He hopes it may bring him a handful of pennies,
To buy him a loaf of brown bread.

Enter OLD WOMAN, *with* CHILDREN, L., *from behind shoe. The largest hangs on to her skirts, the next in size to the largest, until they dwindle to the smallest; repeat song as they enter slowly, turn to* R., *march across stage; turn to* L., *march across again; turn to* R., *and form across stage.*

O. W. Now go away, old man. 'Tis very queer
That you should seek to waste your sweetness here;
For we've no money, not a cent, to pay
For music; so you'd better up and move away.

Santa. Alas, alas! and can you be unkind
To one who's been by Fortune left behind;
Who has no friend, no money, and no clo'es;
The hunted victim of unnumbered woes?

Good dame, I ask not money: if you please,
A simple crust my hunger to appease.

O. W. Good gracious! Starving! Children, do you hear?
The old man's hungry: quickly disappear!

(CHILDREN *scamper behind shoe.*)

Santa. She drives them in. To me 'tis very clear
Old Santa fails to find a welcome here.

O. W. We're very poor, have fasted many a day,
Yet from our door ne'er drove the poor away.

Song; air, "Balm of Gilead," by the CHILDREN, *who march in as before, carrying sticks, on which are stuck apples, potatoes, crusts of bread, turnip, carrot, "beat," &c. They move around the stage, singing as they pass* SANTA; *the last time, pitch their potatoes, &c., into his tin kitchen. He stands* L. *of stage;* OLD WOMAN, R.

Oh, you sha'n't be hungry now,
Oh, you sha'n't be hungry now,
Oh, you sha'n't be hungry now,
Down at Copper Toe Shoe.
Cold potato — tato,
Cold potato — tato,
Cold pota — to,
Down at Copper Toe Shoe.

(*No interlude.*)

Oh, you sha'n't be hungry now,
Oh, you sha'n't be hungry now,
Oh, you sha'n't be hungry now,
Down at Copper Toe Shoe.
Crusts for breakfast — breakfast,
Crusts for breakfast — breakfast,
Crusts for break — fast,
Down at Copper Toe Shoe.

Oh, you sha'n't be hungry now,
Oh, you sha'n't be hungry now,
Oh, you sha'n't be hungry now,
Down at Copper Toe Shoe.
Broth for supper — supper,
Broth for supper — supper,
Broth for sup — per,
Down at Copper Toe Shoe.

Oh, you sha'n't, &c.

Santa. Well, well, I'm puzzled! Here's a grand surprise.
Bless me, the tears are dropping from my eyes!
Thank you, my children. This is quite bewitchin';
With eatables you've nearly filled my kitchen.
Ah, little ones! you've learned the better part.
They are the poor who lack the kindly heart;
Aud they the rich, the noble, and the high,
Who never willing pass the sufferer by.
Now comes my triumph. Children, speak up bright:

What day is this?

All. Christmas.

Little Girl. No; 'tis Christmas night!

Santa. That's true. Now tell me who, against the laws,
Drops down the chimneys?

All. Why, old Santa Claus!

Santa. Bless me! how bright and nice these children are!
Each eye doth sparkle like the evening star.
Now, then, suppose I were that ancient sprite,
What would you ask, to give you most delight?

Child 1. I'd have a sled.

Child 2. A doll.

Child 3. A kite for me.

Child 4. Something still better.

Santa. What?

Child 4. A Christmas tree!

All Children. Oh, my! Good gracious! Wouldn't that be grand?

O. W. Too grand, my chicks, for you to understand.
Why, such a tree within our old shoe spread,
Would from their fastenings tear out every thread;
Make every peg to start from out its socket,
And send the buckle flying like a rocket.

Santa. Good, good! there's fun beneath that wrinkled phiz.
At playing Santa Claus, let's make a biz.
Suppose me Santa Claus. I bless you all:
Then from my waistcoat let this oven fall,

(*Takes off kitchen.*)

Throw off this mantle with a sudden jerk,

(*Throws off disguise, and appears as* SANTA CLAUS.)

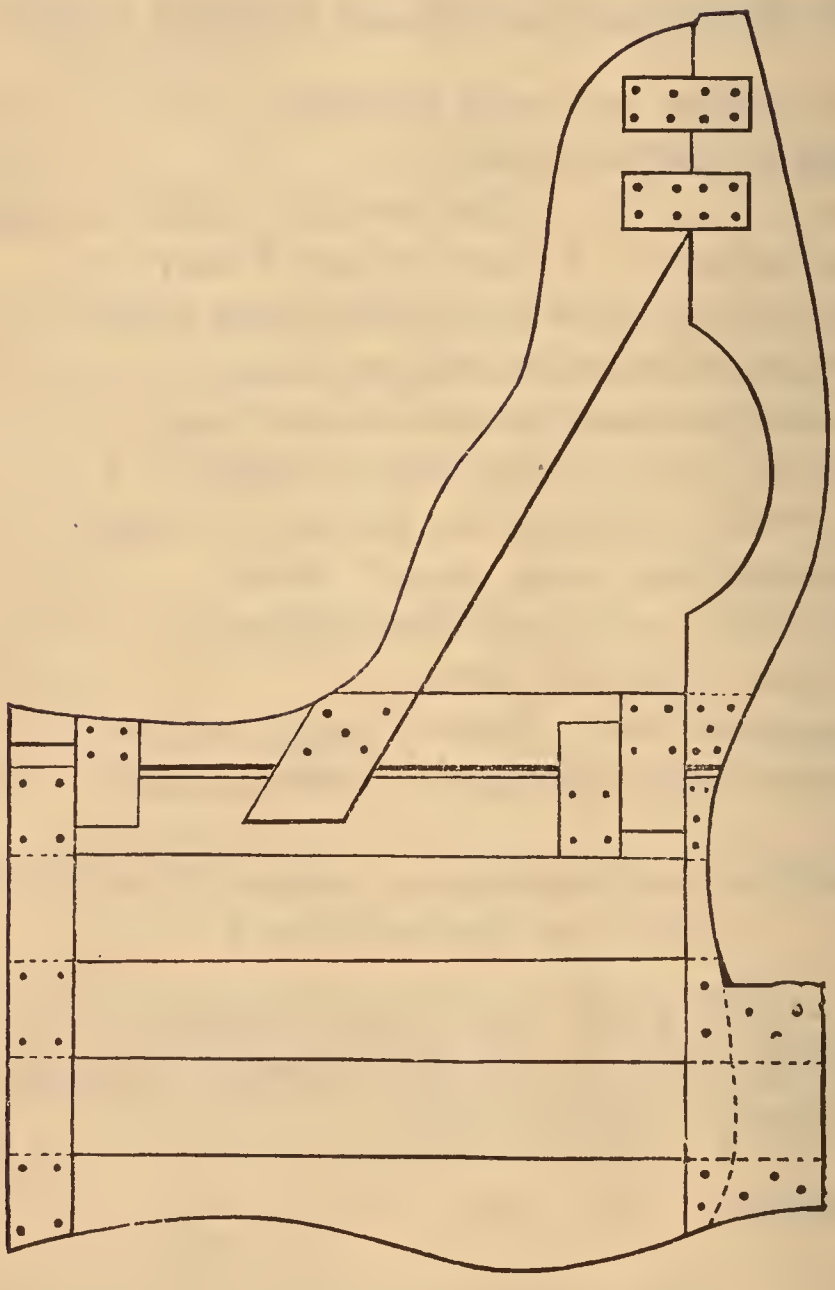
And in an instant set myself to work.

Children. 'Tis Santa Claus!

Santa. You're right. I am the man,
Yours to command. I'll serve you if I can;
For I have found, good dame, that honest worth
Can burrow in the lowliest spot on earth;
That sweet compassion's ne'er so poorly fed,
But what she finds an extra crust of bread.
Now, to reward your generous hearts, my chicks,
Into the earth these magic seeds I sticks;
These cabalistic words in Hebrew mutter,—
"Ene, mene, moni, suti, sutter;"
Presto! appear! and, glittering bright and free,
Beams on your sight the mystic Christmas tree.

(*Shoe divides, and disappears* R. *and* L. *Curtains at back open, disclosing tree.*)

Song: "We'll gather round the Christmas Tree."
SANTA CLAUS *and* OLD WOMAN *distribute presents to the company. Curtain falls.*



REAR VIEW OF COPPER TOE SHOE HOUSE.

NOTE. — This entertainment was prepared for a Sunday school's Christmas Eve, and was arranged as follows: A stage, fourteen feet square, was fitted with a "roll-up" curtain in front. Drapery was hung at the sides and back; a Christmas tree, filled with presents, was placed well back on the stage, and hidden by curtains arranged to separate in the middle. In front of these was placed "Copper Toe Shoe House." The rear view represents the frame made of wood, in two pieces, to separate in the middle, of the following dimensions: ten feet from toe to heel, five feet and one half from heel to top, four feet and one half across top, heel about twenty inches long, eight inches high. Cover front, in two separate sections, with black cambric; for toe, copper tinsel paper; for sole and patch, brown cambric; for buckle, silver tinsel paper; the patch fastened only at bottom. A curtain, of same material or color as back stage, should be hung in rear of shank, that children standing behind may not be seen. A settee is placed behind it, on which the children in the dwelling stand. 1, 2, and 3 lie upon the stage, and stick their heads out when required. The characters can pass between the curtains at back, to their places. When the tree is disclosed, all the characters are in front, the settee is removed, the braces unfastened, and, at a signal, two boys run off the shoe, and others draw the curtains.

THE WIDOW MULLINS' CHRISTMAS

A Christmas Entertainment for Children

BY

STANLEY YALE BEACH AND H. ARTHUR POWELL

THE WIDOW MULLINS' CHRISTMAS.

CHARACTERS.

GUY MILLINGTON, *student, aged eighteen.*
SYLVESTER Y. MILLINGTON, *Guy's brother, aged sixteen; known to his family and acquaintances as "Swy."*
SNAPPER, *Swy's dog.*
THE WIDOW MULLINS.

THE WIDOW MULLINS' THIRTEEN CHILDREN.

MARY ANN, *aged sixteen.*
SUSAN JANE, *aged fourteen.*
MARY LOUISA, *aged twelve.*
HOPE, *aged ten.*
FAITH, *aged nine.*
CHARITY, *aged six.*
TOM, *aged fourteen.*
PETER, *aged thirteen.*
DICK, *aged twelve.*
HARRY, *aged eleven.*
JOHN, *aged eight.*
JAMES, *aged seven.*
THE BABY, *age uncertain; (best not to use the real article.)*

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

L. means left. R. right. C. centre. L. C. left centre. R. C. right centre. F. front. L. F. left front. R. F. right front. (The reader is supposed to be on the stage, facing the audience.)

COPYRIGHT, 1897, BY WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

INTRODUCTION.

This little play was written for the children, and has been given by the authors with decided success: it will amuse and entertain both young and old, and will well repay those who produce it for their trouble in drilling the children.

The scenery and costumes are extremely simple. The first act shows the interior of a study shared in common by the brothers, Guy and "Swy" Millington. This should be a cosy little room with a few pictures on the walls, a small table on which are some lesson-books, pen, ink, and paper, at L. F., and a low seat for Swy R. F. Tennis-rackets, polo-sticks, and a football may be hung up or stood in the

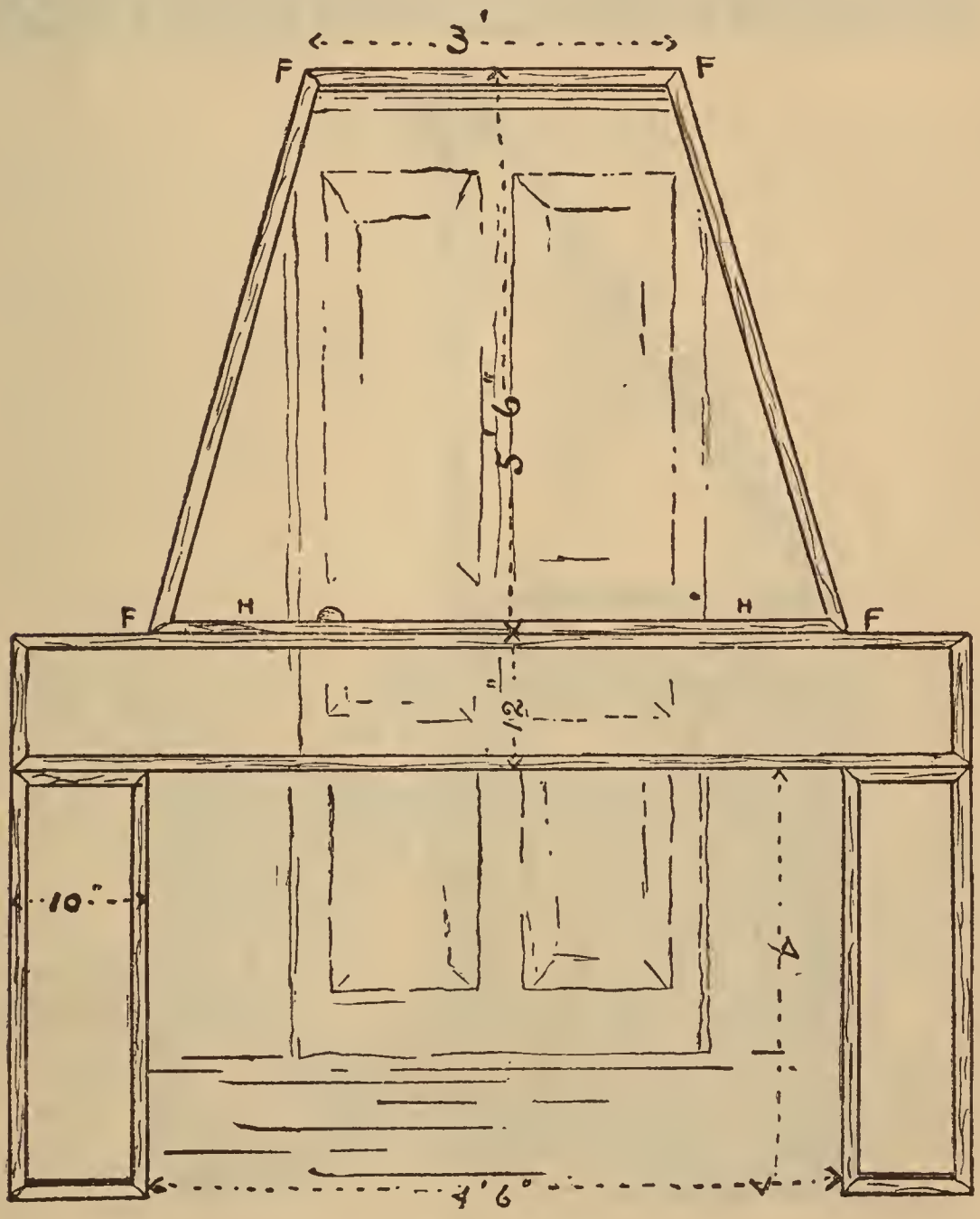


FIG. 1.

corners of the room; sufficient floor and wall space R. C. for Swy's bicycle.

In the second and third acts the interior of the Widow Mullins' cottage is represented. The chief feature of this scene, and the only one in the entire play that is at all difficult of production, is the old-fashioned fireplace. This is made by stretching unbleached muslin over a framework of wood, and painting it to represent smoke-blackened stonework; or, if you doubt your artistic ability, some black or very dark gray fabric may be used, and painting dispensed with; but of course the former method is by far the most effective. The accompanying diagram will make clear the way in which the framework should be put together. The size of the fireplace and chimney is optional, but they must be large enough to allow of the descent of Guy and Swy, who in the third act impersonate Santa Claus and his assistant, Zero. The dimensions given here are those used by the authors, and if sufficient stage room is at your command it will be well not to reduce

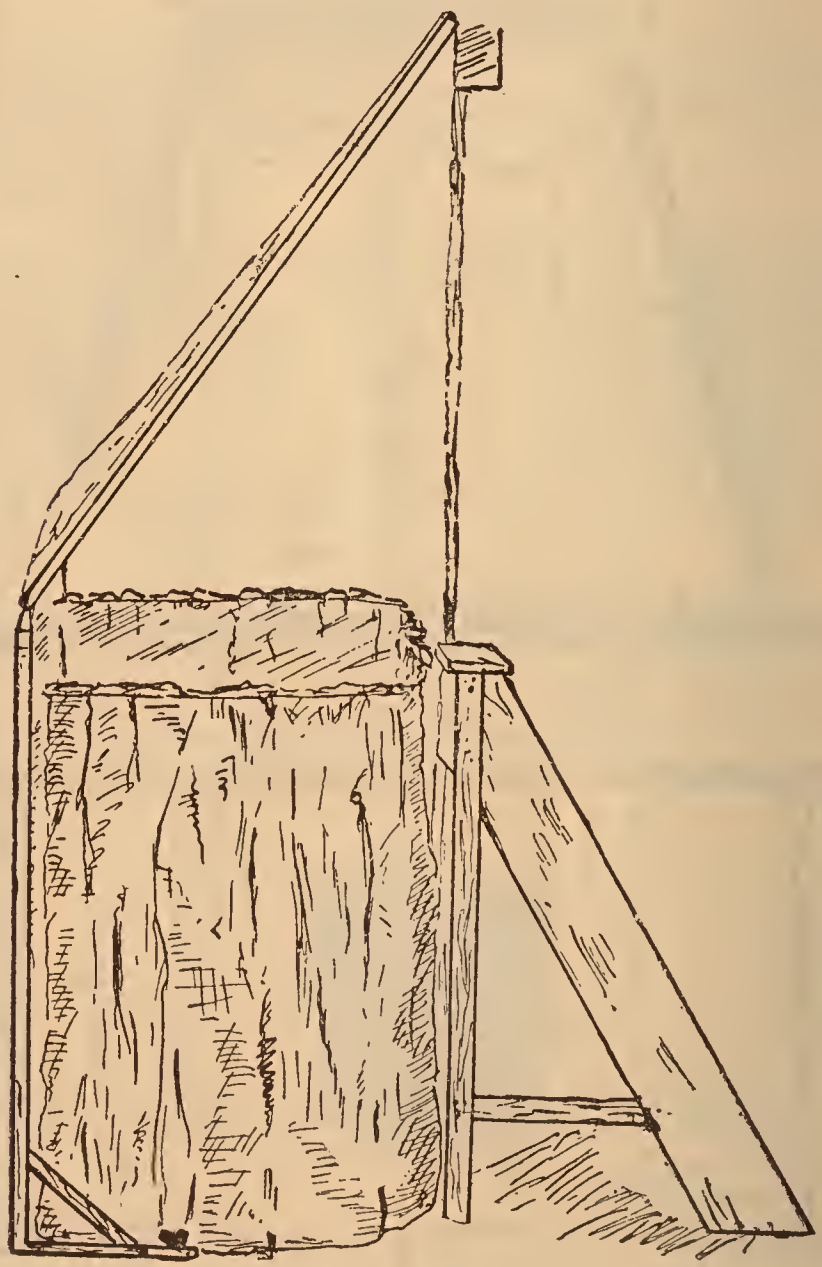


FIG. 2

them. The fireplace is preferably placed in front of the centre entrance, about four feet from the wall or back scene; the upper edge of the flap F. which is hinged to the main frame at H. H. rests against the wall, and is a good imitation of a slanting flue, serving also to conceal the entrance. A background of black stuff is hung on a stout wire running in a half-circle from the back of one side of the fireplace to the back of the other side, and the set-piece is complete. A step-ladder at the back of the centre entrance enables Santa and Zero to appear as if coming from the roof by way of the chimney, and to lower the pack of toys. If there is no centre door to your stage, the piece can be set L. and an entrance effected from the side.

The rest of the furniture in the second and third acts consists of a screen R. behind which the girls can wash the dishes, a table, a low stool used as a whipping-block, and other old chairs, stools, and boxes, used as seats by the youngsters. There should be a row of pegs, on which are hung wraps and overcoats. an old mirror, and a shelf with a small clock upon it, all L.

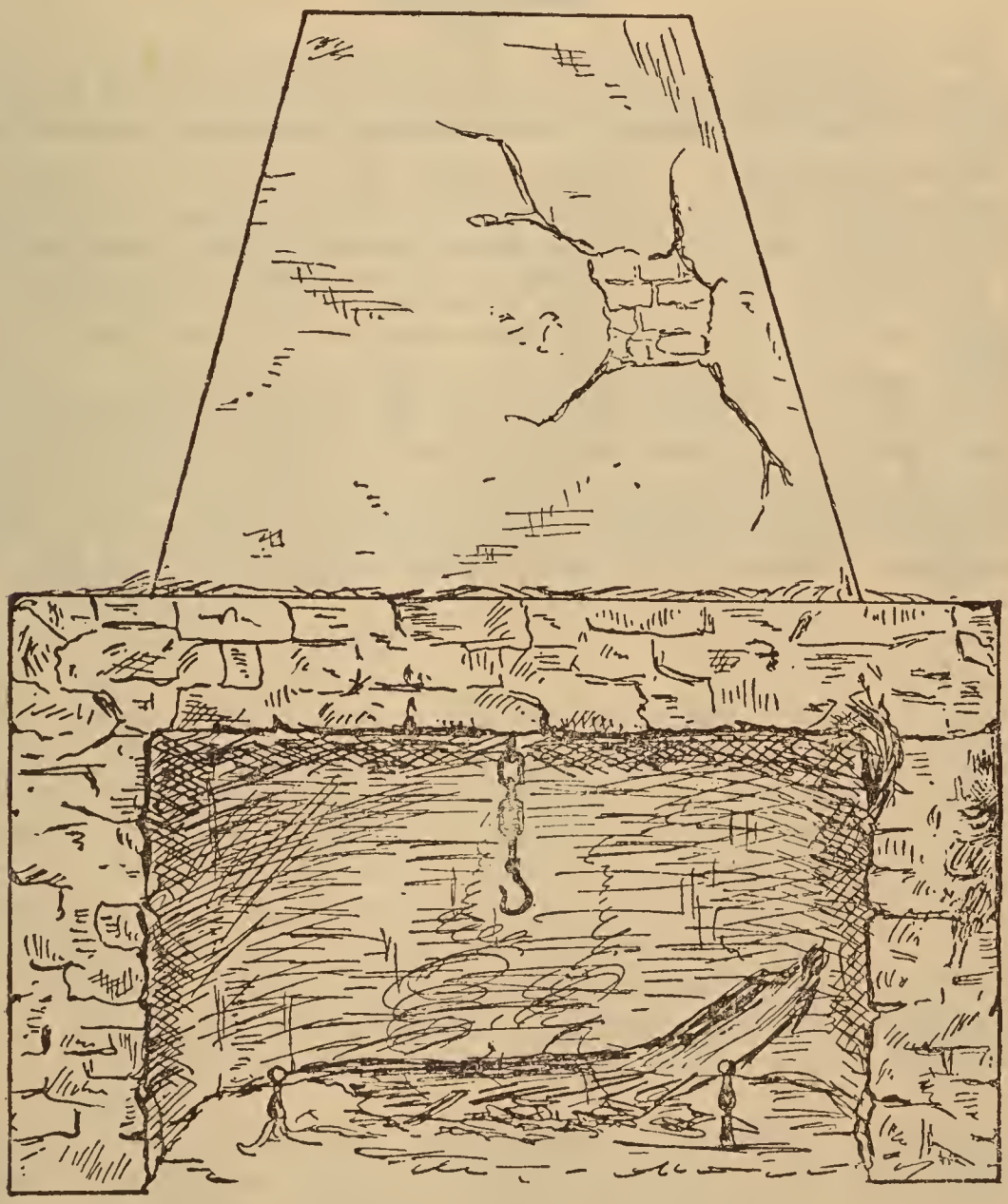


FIG. 3.

COSTUMES.

GUY MILLINGTON. First and second Acts, ordinary suit of a young student of to-day. Third Act, Santa Claus Costume—white wig and beard, padded knickerbockers and stockings, long cloak trimmed with fur.

SWY MILLINGTON. First and second Acts, bicycle suit—knickerbockers, and sweater emblazoned with club emblem. Third Act, eccentric old man—black tights, short brown cloak, gray hair and gray pointed beard; carries a walking-stick of the "Mother Goose" type.

THE WIDOW MULLINS wears a neat but very much faded gown of some quiet color; hair brought smoothly down on each side of forehead.

The Widow's Children wear old clothes patched conspicuously and often with stuff of other material than that of the original garment. Peter has a wig of coarse red hair, and is padded to look ridiculously fat; this part should be taken by a large boy. The parts of CHARITY and PETER are the principal ones among the children, and on their being well played depends, to a great extent, the success of the performance. CHARITY should be played by as little a girl as possible.

THE WIDOW MULLINS' CHRISTMAS.

ACT I.

Scene I.—*The brother's study, 8 : 15 a. m. As the curtain rises* GUY *is discovered seated at* L., *writing busily. Soon, however, he begins to show signs of impatience, yawns, shuffles feet, writes something, growls, "Oh, bother! that won't do!" and viciously dashes his pen across the offending sentence. At last:—*

Guy (*throwing down pen*). I'll be hanged if I can make any headway on this essay! Who but Professor Molecules would set a fellow to write an essay on "The Physiological Peculiarities of the Donkey?" I wish old Molecules and his physiological peculiarities were at Jericho. Here I am wasting precious time in trying to explain the action of an ass's hind leg in kicking, and his jawbone in mastication, when I might be qualifying myself for the position of half-back on the school football team in place of Toggles, who got his nose broken last week. Well, there's no use in howling over it; I must settle down to work again. (*Reads last sentence written.*) "It is a noteworthy and not generally known fact that the donkey's throat is formed after the fashion of a fog-horn, so that sounds formulated with moderation in the recesses of the animal's vocal organs, reach the ear with"—hm!—"startling distinctness." (*Looking up.*) I don't know that the last phrase does justice to the beast; anyhow I haven't overstated the facts.

[*Here the slamming of a door and a tremendous whistling, stamping, and shouting is heard without. A bicycle bell lends its trill to the uproar, and a dog is barking joyfully.*

Guy (*with a start and a despairing gesture*). Good gracious! That's my young brother returned from his ride! Now, I shan't have a minute's peace before dinner.

Enter SWY, *attired in bicycle knickerbockers and sweater, wheeling his machine into the room. His dog,* SNAPPER, *tied to the rear of the frame, naturally follows. In one hand* SWY *holds a copy of the "Sunny Hour" and a letter.*

Swy (*making a good deal of noise and commotion and not noticing his brother's angry face*). Come on, Snapper, old doggie. (*Proceeds to lean the machine against the wall and untie the panting dog.*) Hello, Guy,—you there? Good old doggie! Say, Guy, I've had no end of fun. It's rather cold, to be sure, but I made the old wheel hum. (*Speaking very fast and with animation.*) I tied Snapper to the machine, you see, and scorched along to the postoffice. I went so fast the poor old stupid couldn't keep up and he fell over, and got bowled along like a ball, which was a much easier way for him to get there if he'd only thought so. But he objected so confoundedly loud that your musty old Professor Molecules, who was taking an early morning walk and reading "Milton" at the same time, stood right in my way and made me dismount and untie the beast; but I tied him up again two minutes later, though I didn't go so fast; and that's what makes him look so dusty—ho! ho! ho!—and I got the new "Sunny Hour" at the office and——

Guy (*savagely*). There that'll do! You clear out of here, with your old wheels and dogs and "Sunny Hours," d'you hear? Get out; can't you see I'm writing?

Swy. Whew! But the dear brother is in a tantrum. All right, old man, you'll get your letter when your temper improves. [*Tantalizingly showing the letter and pulling* SNAPPER *by the string towards the door.*

Guy. Come here, you monkey; is that letter for me?

Swy. 'Oo s'all have it if 'oo's a dood boy, darling.

Guy. Stow that drivel, and hand it over.

Swy. Oh, all right. May I stay in the room?

Guy. Yes, yes. Only don't play the giddy ox, there's a good fellow. (*Aside.*) It's a letter from Alice, the dear girl.

Swy. No, I'm going to read my "Sunny Hour." Here's your letter.

[*Hands letter to* GUY, *who opens it with feverish haste; then tying* SNAPPER *to the leg of the chair at* L., *he seats himself and commences to read.*

Guy (*having opened his letter*). Oh, hang it! You villain, Swy, you knew what this was!

Swy (*innocently*). What?

Guy. Oh, you know. Take that! [*Throws a book at him.*

Swy (*laughing and dodging the missile*). Ha! ha! A bill from his tailor, Solomon Cutt. (*Resumes reading.*) Hello!

What's Tello saying in this editorial? (*Reads.*) "Dear readers of the 'Sunny Hour':—Before the next issue of this paper comes to the hands of those who are interested in its mission, Christmas, jolly Christmas, will have paid us his brief annual visit, and departed. To many, no doubt, the memory of this visit with all the joys in its train will be a pleasant one; to others, oh, the pity of it! nothing but the bitter memories of sorrow and starvation will remain. In our great cities especially, it is all too easy too find families to whom the word 'Christmas' is synonymous with 'cold' and 'hunger.' And even our peaceful villages and hamlets all have their share of poverty-stricken inhabitants; then let every one of us, before this year joins the ranks of the dead past, do what we can, however little that may be, to relieve the sufferings of our less fortunate neighbors, and to make the name of 'Christmas' have as cheery a ring in their ears as in ours. Perhaps you know some motherless children forced not only to provide their own scanty living, but obliged also to give to a drunken father the greater portion of the pitifully small amount which they earn or receive at the hands of charity. Or you may have in mind some poor widow, aged and feeble, who seldom has even the little food required to nourish her, or sufficient fuel to make comfortable that frame which has not the warm blood of youth to sustain it. No matter what form the poverty that is nearest your hand may take, make it less unbearable, if only by a cheering word of sympathy and hope; but we can all do something more than that; I leave it to the promptings of your own hearts, and from experience know that the readers of the 'Sunny Hour' will nobly respond to the call. Yours for the good cause, Tello J. D'Apery." That's what I call a pretty good editorial. There's something in it that sort of stirs a fellow up, and makes him feel mean, and a pig, and all that sort of thing, to be stuffing himself with good things while poor folks haven't even shoes and stockings to wear—let alone bicycles and skates and all the rest of the things that make life worth living. Why, I'm mad as a bear when I come from school and have to wait fifteen minutes for dinner, and goodness knows what would happen if there were no hot dinner forthcoming. . . . There's the Widow Mullins, now, and her thirteen children—just think of it—thirteen! and every one of them still going to school. She has to keep the whole lot clothed and fed by taking in washing for our folks and a few other families. Look at that stuttering son of hers named Peter. He must eat enough for a dozen ordinary fellows, judging by his bulk. . . . By George! I've got a great idea! We'll make up a box of clothes and presents and stuff, and send 'em to her Christmas Eve; the young ones will think

Santa Claus brought 'em, I'll bet. I'll talk it over with Guy; his old essay must wait awhile. [*Crosses over to speak to* GUY.

Guy (*in testy soliloquy*). Now what on earth is there peculiar about a donkey's digestive organs?

Swy. Better dissect yourself and find out, old man.

[*Takes a seat at table opposite* GUY.

Guy. What! Can't you be still five minutes?

Swy. Come, old fellow, let the thing slide for a while. I've got a scheme for you.

Guy. What is it this time—a flying machine, or a bicycle-motor, or another plan for electrocuting the neighbors' cats?

Swy. Oh, bosh! Nothing like that. You know the Widow Mullins?

Guy (*who has been absently glancing over his essay*). Oh, horrors!

Swy. Why, what's the matter?

Guy (*groaning*). I believe this is another black mark against you! Weren't you talking aloud or something, a minute or two ago?

Swy. Ye-es, I think I was.

Guy. Of course! and here I've been putting down what you were gabbling about. Listen to this bosh. (*Reads.*) "A great many donkeys are too poor to buy their own shoes, and their little ones have no stockings to hang up at Christmas for Santa Claus to fill." (*Flings essay aside in disgust, while* SWY *indulges in immoderate laughter.*) They say childish prattle enlivens one, and drives away the blues; fire away, kid; we'll try the recipe.

Swy. Now, don't get on your high horse, and pretend you are my senior by a dozen years; it's brain that tells, every time. And now, listen to what my brain has concocted. Tello D'Apery, the young editor of the "Sunny Hour," you know, and the fellow who runs the "Barefoot Mission" in New York, has written a rattling editorial, asking everybody to help their poorer neighbors along, and all that sort of thing; now, there's the Widow Mullins with the thirteen young ones; she needs help if anybody does. We might make up a box of clothes and toys and eatables—there are lots of things we can spare,—and send 'em to her incognito, in the name of Santa Claus; then we can peep in the windows and see the children's eyes bulge out when all the goodies come to view; how is that for a plan, old man,—are you with me?

Guy (*evidently "with him," but not disposed to give his brother credit for the idea*). Hm! Pretty fair notion for a youngster. Yes, I'll help you, on condition that we go into the cottage and take a hand in the fun ourselves.

Swy. Eh! Why, how can we without giving ourselves away?

Guy (*loftily*). Well, just to help you out, I'll consent to dress up as the children's saint and take the things in a pack ;—you can be my assistant and carry the pack.

Swy. Oh, yes! I dare say! I'm Santa Claus, if anybody is, and you can carry the pack yourself. Who suggested the thing anyway?

Guy. I did, the Santa Claus part. But you can't object to this ; we'll toss up a quarter for it—got a quarter?

Swy. N-no. (*Feeling in his pocket.*) But I've got a nickel.

Guy. Better use a quarter; it's larger and not so liable to get lost. (*Aside, and winking solemnly at audience.*) I know the kid never has a quarter left at this time of the week ; now for my innocent loaded one! (*To* SWY.) Never mind, here's one. Chuck it up yourself, or you'll swear I cheat.

Swy. All right. Heads or tails?

Guy. Tails. (SWY *tosses, and both eagerly run to where it falls*). Tails it is. I win. Sorry for you, old man.

Swy (*very much in earnest*). So'm I!

Guy. What do you say to taking a ride past the widow's cottage? We've lots of time, and I want to mature my plans.

Swy. His plans! Well, come ahead. But what about your essay?

Guy. I'll manage it after lunch ; bring your wheel along ; mine's downstairs (*significantly*)—in its proper place. Hurry up. [*Business of untying dog as curtain descends.*

ACT II.

Scene.—*Interior of* WIDOW'S *cottage: the main room at* 8 A. M. *on Monday morning. The older girls are engaged in clearing off the table and washing the dishes.* PETER *is seated at table gorging himself with the last bit of food.* JAMES *and* JOHN *are whittling whistles out of willow rods at* L. F. MARIA LOUISA *is teaching* FAITH, HOPE, *and* CHARITY, *their spelling lesson* R. F. *As the curtain rises* MARY ANN *is gathering up the dishes.*

Mary Ann. Peter, you good-for-nothing young stuff-box, get up from that table immediately, and let me have your plate. (*She seizes his plate, but he takes hold of it and will not let her carry it away.*) What! You won't get up? Very well, we'll see about that ; your mother will be down in a few minutes, and you just wait and see what she'll do.

[*Takes off some of the dishes as* PETER *continues stuffing himself.*

Maria Louise (*to* FAITH, HOPE, *and* CHARITY, *who are ranged in line before her, and have turned about to look at* PETER). Come now, children, don't stand gazing at your big, ever-hungry brother all day. You've got your spelling lesson to learn before school time, and that's nearly here now. (*They all face about and stand attentively.*) Well, Faith, how do you spell *dog?*

Faith. D-o-g, dog.

M. L. Correct. Next,—*cow.*

Hope. K-o-w, cow.

M. L. No, no. That's all wrong. Hope, *will* you ever learn to spell? You haven't the least idea of sound. Now try once more. Co—cow.

Hope (*slowly*). K,—ka,—k-a-o, cow.

M. L. Oh, dear, you're too trying for anything. No. That's no more like it than the man in the moon. Charity, can *you* spell cow?

Charity (*contemptuously*). Oh, yes! C-o-w, cow.

M. L. Right. You're some consolation, anyway. Go above your sister.

Charity. No, I'll not go this time. Give her another chance.

M. L. All right. We'll start at the head again. Faith, spell *rat.*

Faith (*without hesitation*). R-a-t, rat.

M. L. Good. Now, Hope, I'll try you again. Spell *cat.*

Hope. K-a-t, cat.

M. L. Oh, dear, there you go again. It's really no use trying to teach that child to——

[CHARITY *has whispered to* HOPE *how to spell the word and* HOPE *here interrupts.*

Hope (*spelling up loud*). C-a-t, cat.

M. L. Oh, you've got it at last, have you? I suppose Charity told you though. Yes,—c-a-t, cat; c-a-t, cat; c-a-t, cat. Knock it into your brain and see if you can hold it there; I never saw such stupidity in all my life.

[HOPE *repeats rapidly half-a-dozen times, "C-a-t, cat," at the same time knocking her forehead with her fist.*

M. L. There. Now see if you can remember it two minutes. (*Speaking up suddenly.*) How 'd you say you spelt *cat?*

Hope. K-a,—*c*-a-t, cat.

M. L. All right. Now see that you don't forget it. Next; Charity, how do you spell *chickens.*

Char. C-h-i-c-k, chick; e-n-s, ens; chickens.

M. L. Good for you, Charity. You're a credit to your family, and ought to reach the head of your class to-day, sure. (*Turning to* FAITH.) Faith, spell *pig.*

Faith (*slowly*). P-i-g, pig.

M. L. That's right. What sort of a looking creature is a pig, do you know?

Faith. Oh, yes. It's a big, fat animal—so fat it can hardly walk.

M. L. How many legs has it got?

Faith. Four. Just as many as Fido.

Char. Some pigs only have two legs. I know where there's one of that kind.

M. L. Why, Charity Mullins. Whoever heard of such a thing. Where on earth did you ever see a pig with only two legs? [CHARITY, *smiling, points at* PETER.

Peter (*stammering, and with his mouth full*). Charity, d-d-d-don't you d-d-dare c-call me a p-p-p-pig! I'll c-come over there and wa-wa-wallop you, if you c-c-call me a p-p-pig again.

M. L. Well, Peter, that's just what you are, and you deserve to be called one; and you shan't touch Charity for calling you one either. Come, boys, let's tease the life out of that big, fat brother of yours, and stop him from stuffing himself any fuller.

[MARIA LOUISE *crosses over to* JOHN *and* JAMES, *and beckons the other girls to help do the teasing. They stand in a row at his right hand while she stands with the two boys at his left.* MARY ANN *and* SUSAN JANE *take their places behind him a little at either side. All point their fingers at him, and say, as quickly and sharply as they can.*

All. P-i-g, pig; p-i-g, pig; p-i-g, pig; piggy, pig, pig!

The first little pig went to market.
But this great, big pig stayed at home;
And this big pig ate all the roast beef,
So the next little pig had none;
And that little pig said, "Boo-hoo-hoo,
"He's ate his share and my share too."
Piggy, piggy, piggy, eat all you can,
And you'll soon be as fat as a big alder*man*.

Widow Mullins (*entering hurriedly as the chorus is being chanted and flinging an armful of soiled linen on the floor*). Well, well, well. What's up now? Do you mean to say that simpleton of a Peter ain't got up from the table yet?

[PETER *shows signs of fear.*

Mary Ann. Yes, ma. I've been trying to get him away this last half hour.

Susan Jane. So she has, ma, but he's the biggest pig that ever was.

Widow. Come here, you young scalawag, I'll soon fix you. (*Seizes* PETER *by the ear, drags him to the front of the stage, and says as she shakes him vigorously.*) What do you mean

by eating us all out of house and home, the first thing on Monday morning? What do you mean by it? Tell me, sir; tell me!

Peter (*whimpering*). I wa-wa-was hungry.

Widow. O, you were hungry, were you! Well, isn't anybody else hungry beside you? What about all the rest of us? Aren't we ever hungry too? But that don't mean we've got to go an' eat up all the victuals what's in the house at one meal. We only eat our shares of 'em, an' I'll teach you not to eat more than yours!

[HARRY **enters** *with an armful of wood which he deposits on the hearth. The* WIDOW *lays* PETER *across a stool.*

Widow. Here, girls, Maria Louise, bring me a good stick out of that pile. Don't you dare move a speck, sir! Now (*taking stick*) you will eat up all the victuals, will you? The next time you start to do it, remember that (*hits him a crack*) and that (*hits him again*) and that! (*a third blow.*)

[PETER *at each blow lets forth an "Ow!" making the emphasis more pronounced each time. After the last blow.*

Peter. Ow! That'll do, m-ma! I w-w-won't eat the v-v-ittals up again. I p-p-promise you I won't.

Widow. You won't, eh? Well, to make sure you won't we'll all take a hand in emphasizing the matter. Come, children, you may all take turns, and each give your brother a good sound reminder. Here, Maria Louise, you can give the first one.

[*Hands* M. L. *the stick.*

M. L. Here, Peter darling, is my love-tap; and don't you ever dare to threaten you'll wallop Charity again.

[*Hits him and gives stick to* MARY ANN.

Enter DICK, R., *with a bag of eggs in his hand.*

Dick. Well, ma, I've got your eggs, but I had to chase all over town before I could find them. Eggs is awful scarce. (*Advances to* R. F. *hurriedly, takes a glance at* MARY ANN *just about to strike* PETER, *and in his astonishment drops the bag of eggs.*) Gee Whilikens! What are y' doin' to Peter?

[MARY *delivers her blow as these words are being spoken. The girls who are looking at* DICK *catch their breath and say "Oh!" as the bag falls, then point at it. The* WIDOW, *enraged, walks up to* DICK.

Widow. What are we doing to Peter? You'd better ask what we are going to do to you, you young Jackanapes! Look at that bag of eggs lying there on the floor and tell me (*shakes him*), tell me, sir, what you mean!

[DICK *looks at bag in surprise, evidently not knowing that he has dropped it. Then turns to his mother and says, in a bewildered manner.*

Dick. Why, ma, I—did I drop those eggs? Why, I thought I laid them on the table. (*Realizing what he has done.*) Oh, I didn't mean to do it, indeed I didn't! Please don't whip me for it, ma, and I'll never, never, never do such a thing again.

Widow. Oh, you won't, eh? Well, that don't bring back the eggs, all the same; and I guess——

Dick. Oh, ma, if you'll let me off I'll get you some more eggs, and earn the money to pay for them myself; I will, 'pon my honor.

Widow. Well, now, that's different; if you get them right away I think I'll let you off. However, before you go, a few smart raps on that hand will be good for it, so's to teach it not to drop things so easily next time. Maria Louise, bring me half of a good stiff shingle so I can fix——

[*While the* WIDOW *has been talking to* DICK, PETER *has got up, put on his muffler and cap, and is making his way to the door as he is discovered.*

M. L. Oh, there goes Peter!

Widow. What! Peter up! (*Rushes after him, and collars him just as he is going through the doorway.*) Here, you rascal! What are you doing? going away before you've had half your punishment? Didn't I tell you not to move a particle, an' here you are going out of the house!

Peter. I th-th-th-thought it was s-s-s-s-school-time.

Widow. You did, eh? Well, why didn't you ask me if you could go, then? You know very well that's just an excuse; an' I'll make you settle for it. Get down there where you belong!

[*Pushing him over to the whipping-block.*

Dick (*aside*). I guess it's time for me to light out. Poor Peter! I pity him.

Widow. There. Now, boys (*to* JAMES *and* JOHN) hold your brother in position while I give him another reminder.

[*They take the ends of* PETER'S *muffler and pull so hard that he is nearly choked. He sputters and tries to cry out.* WIDOW *takes the stick from* MARY ANN *and gives him three good blows.*

Widow. There. I've set the blows a-falling. Hurry up, now, and finish up the job. Here, Susan Jane, it's your turn next.

Susan J. You will keep us girls from washing up the dishes, will you, you bad boy? Take that! (*strikes him*) and my compliments.

[WIDOW *busies herself in getting ready the washing.* FAITH *and* HOPE *deliver their blows, but* CHARITY *refuses the rod.*

Hope. Mamma, Charity won't take the stick.

Widow. Why, what's the matter, Charity? Why don't you spank your naughty brother?

Charity. I don't want to, mamma; he'll be a good boy, now, so don't let them hurt him any more.

Johnny. Ah, no, yer don't!

James. No siree! you don't cheat us.

[*They jump up, seize the stick, and strike their blows in quick succession.*

[CHARITY *gives* PETER *a kiss, undoes his muffler, and wipes his tears with her handkerchief.* PETER *sits down on the stool, holding her in his lap; she plays "peek-a-bo" with him and cheers him up.* MARIA LOUISE *arranges the girls' hair and tidies them up for school. The other girls help their mother prepare for the washing, put dishes away, etc. The boys work on their whistles.* HARRY **enters** *with* TOM, *who carries a milk pail.*

Tom. Here, girls, I've brought you a nice lot of fresh milk from old Daisy. Daisy's her name, and she *is* a daisy, for there isn't a better cow hereabouts. (*Sees* JAMES *and* JOHN.) Well, what are you two youngsters doing?

John. Oh, we're having a race making whistles. (TOM *stands behind him.*) I say, Tom, show me a little, will you, so's I kin beat Jim.

Tom. You're doing all right. You just want to make that nick a little deeper, that's all. Here!

[*Takes whistle, squats down beside* JOHN, *and works on it.* HARRY *goes through a like performance with* JAMES *without speaking.*

Widow (*calls from the next room*). Tom! Tom!

Tom. Yes, ma; coming. There! just finish that up the way I've showed you, and you'll soon have it done.

[*Crossing to the side door.*

Widow (*opening door and looking into the room*). Tom! Oh, you're here, eh? Tom, I wish you'd bring in the wash tubs from out doors and fix them up for me. Maria Louise, have you got those youngsters ready? It's most school time.

M. L. Yes, they're all fixed. Come and see how nice they look.

Widow. I'll be there in a minute, as soon as I look at the baby.

Tom. Come, Harry, and give me a lift with the tubs. Let those kids finish the whistles themselves.

[**Exeunt** TOM *and* HARRY.

M. L. Here, Charity, come and let me tidy you up a little bit, so's to look like your sisters.

[CHARITY *crosses to* MARIA LOUISE. PETER *combs hair and spruces up at back of room.* JOHN *and* JAMES *both finish whistles and start to blow them.* JAMES' *whistles shrilly, but* JOHN'S *won't work.*

James. (*gleefully*). Ah, I beat you that time, anyway. You generally get the bulge on me, but I (*gives a loud blast on whistle*) beat you for once.

John. Huh. That's nothing. You wouldn't have beat me if——

Enter *the* WIDOW, *hurriedly.*

Widow. Who's doing all that tooting? Here, which of you youngsters made all that racket? Why, it's enough to crack one's ear drums.

John. I didn't do it, ma. My whistle won't go.

Widow. It's lucky for you it doesn't, if it makes as much noise as that. Here, James Mullins, hand me that whistle this instant, or I'll give you a good sound thrashing.

[*She tries to take it from him; he manages to throw it to* PETER, *who blows it when his mother's back is turned.*

Widow (*wheeling about and facing* JOHN). I thought you said your whistle wouldn't go. What d'you tell me that lie for?

John. I didn't tell you any lie. My whistle won't go and I didn't blow it.

Widow. Well, I guess I've got ears. Some whistle went, and you're the only one besides Jim that's got one; so I guess you blew it all right enough. I want you to understand you can't play any of those tricks on me and then lie out of them; so come right over here and lay across my knees.

[*She pulls him across to a chair, sits down, and after a tussle gets him over her knees and plies her slipper.* JOHN *cries and sobs.* PETER *and* JAMES *are filled with glee.*

Widow. There! Now see if you can't behave yourself the rest of the day without any more punishment. I'm ashamed of a big boy like you having to get a spanking the first thing Monday morning for lying to his mother. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

John (*sobbing*). No. I d-didn't tell a lie!

Widow. What!

James (*advancing*). No, ma, he didn't. Peter blew the whistle.

Widow. Peter! (PETER *attempts to sneak out, but is met by the boys bringing in the wash tubs and bench*). Oh, you scoundrel! Haven't you had enough of a beating for one day? (PETER *nods an emphatic "Yes."*) I'd give you some more now, but there isn't time. However, you richly deserve it, so remember—the next time James has to take a whipping for anything, the whipping comes to you. Now, you two boys get Mary Ann to spruce you up a bit before going to school.

(*Crosses over to girls.*) Well, Maria Louise, you have got your sisters looking nice for the last day of school. Why, you all look so sweet I think I'll have to give each of you a nice big kiss. There, Faith (*kisses her*), there's one for you. Hope, here's yours (*kisses* HOPE)—a good big one. Now, mind you don't forget your spelling lesson to-day. I shall expect to see you come home at the head of your class. And here's Charity—dear little Charity! She's the sweetest of them all! (*Kisses her.*) There, my dear, you've got the biggest kiss. Remember that when you speak your piece; and speak it the best you know how.

Charity. Shall I speak it for you, mamma, 'fore I go?

Widow. Shall you speak it for me? Bless your little heart, darling, so you shall. But hurry, dear, for the time is flying.

Charity. I will, mamma.

[*She steps forward, makes a courtesy, and recites the following:*

'Twas Christmas Eve. The stockings yet
Hung empty, gently swinging
Their signs to Santa Claus "To Let"
Above the fire bags singing.
"Maybe," says dear mamma, "he'll come
"While yet the red fire lingers;
"And happy be, all cold and numb,
"To stop and warm his fingers,
"And maybe he will say, 'Because
"'They left a good fire burning,
"'I'll be a kind old Santa Claus,
"'Thus good for good returning.'
"And maybe then, with silver key
"His wondrous box unlocking,
"He'll take out pretty gifts till he
"Has filled up every stocking.
"Then up the chimney back he'll go
"O'er tree and roof and steeple,
"Driving his reindeer through the snow
"To visit other people." *

[*The children all clap their hands, and cries of "Good for* CHARITY!" *"Bravo!" etc., are heard.* CHARITY *runs to her mother who kisses her and says.*

Widow. Well done, my little girl, well done! Only speak your piece as well as that and I shall be proud of you.

* From *Harper's Young People*, by permission of Messrs. Harper & Bros.

James (*advancing*). I say, ma, can I speak mine?

Widow. I declare! Are you going to have a full dress rehearsal of the Mullins family? (*Cries of "Yes, that's it!" and "Let's all speak our pieces!"*) Well, I'm willing so far as time will permit, so fire away, James! Peter, you watch the clock and tell us when it's a quarter to nine.

Peter. Y-yes, mum; I w-w-will.

James (*reciting*).

A cat sat on our fence one night
  And merrily sang he;
His coat was mottled black and white
  As I could plainly see.
I called to him, I bawled to him;
  But he would not reply.
He sang with unabated vim,
  And "winked the other eye."
I took my ancient pistol down
  From its accustomed place—
I fear a very murd'rous frown
  O'erspread my handsome face.
I shot at him, nor missed my aim,
  But still he would not go.
Though bullet-pierced, he sang the same,
  My brave, untiring foe.
A thought at last came to my head—
  I sang; (*attempts "doh, re, mi, fah, sol."*)
    I knew he'd wince;
But he did more; in fright he fled,
  I've never seen him since.*

[*The children all laugh, and the* WIDOW MULLINS *remarks.*

Widow. I should think such singing would scare the life out of any cat. Don't give us any more around here. Who's next?

M. L. I am, mamma. [*Advances, bows, and recites.*

Shall I be like Grandma when I am old?
  Shall I wear such a queer little bonnet?—
No feathers, no posies, but just a plain fold
  With a little white edging upon it?
Shall I sit in an easy chair all the day long
  With a great ball of wool and a stocking?
Shall I think it quite dreadful for folks to do wrong,
  And dirt and disorder so shocking?

* From *Harper's Young People*, by permission of Messrs Harper & Bros.

Shall I wear a white cap full of dear little bows,
And a row of white curls on my forehead?
Shall I keep my face clean and take care of my clothes,
And never be snappish and horrid?
Shall I think that the Bible's the nicest of books,
And remember the sermon on Sunday,
And not think how stupid the minister looks,
And wish it would only be Monday?

Just wait till I tell you what Grandma once said—
I hope that you won't think me crazy,
It happened one day when they sent me to bed
For being ill-tempered and lazy.
She came and sat by me and patted my hand,
And told me, "There's no use in crying;
"It's by stumbling, my pet, that we learn to stand,
"And we always grow better by trying."

"Was anyone ever so wicked as me?"
I asked her between my sobbing,—
Then Grandma laughed just as hard as could be
And the white curls went merrily bobbing.
"Was any one ever so naughty as you?
"I'm sure that I know of one other."
"Who was it?" I asked. "Oh, please tell me, do!"
She whispered, "Your own Grandmother."

Now isn't it strange? But of course it is true;
I can tell you just one thing about it—
She'd not tell a story, whatever she'd do,
And we'd only be silly to doubt it.
But of course I feel certain you never will tell,
For how perfectly dreadful 'twould be
To have people know, who all love her so well,
That Grandma was ever like me.*

[*They all applaud.* JOHN *steps forward immediately and says.*

I'd like to know a pile of things
Like, "What's a bogglewump?"
And "Why don't little boys have wings?"
And how far frogs can jump.
And what makes fishes snap at flies,
And what keeps logs afloat,
And how to make nice pumpkin pies,
And how long-lived's a goat.

* From *Harper's Young People*, by permission of Messrs. Harper & Bros.

That's why I hate the way they do
In all these stupid schools,—
They skip the things I want to know,
And only teach me rules.

[*Children laugh and applaud.*

Widow. You learn your rules well and then perhaps they'll teach you some of the queer things you want to know.

Faith (*has advanced into place and now recites*).

The frost is the meanest fellow
In this jolly world of ours ;
For he turns the leaves all yellow,
And he puckers up the flowers.
Then the bees have no more honey,
And the birds, away they go
In search of a land that's sunny,
For they hate the frost and snow ;
The Frost King lives in a castle
In a northern country cold,
But I'd find a plan, were I a man,
To drive him out of his hold.
Oh, I'd build a big, big bonfire
At every gate and door ;
It would be such fun, for he'd have to run
And then he'd be King no more.*

[*In the midst of the applause* HARRY *steps forward and says :*

Harry. This is a composition on "Boys."

Widow. We don't want to hear it then. We have enough of boys without hearing any composition on 'em. This rehearsal is just to speak pieces.

[*Cries of "Oh, no, mamma, let him read it!" "Yes, ma, let him! Go ahead, Harry!" etc.*

Widow. Well, go ahead then ! But hurry.

Harry (*reads*). "I'm one, and I'm glad of it. I'd hate to be a girl, because she can't climb a tree,—like the oyster in the conundrum : 'Why is an oyster like an elephant?' I've always been a boy, too, though I did wear dresses for several years when I was young and couldn't help myself. . . . . Boys are more masculine than girls, who are ephemeral by nature ; we like to be out in thunder storms and get our feet wet, but girls are like chickens when the rain comes down. It always makes me laugh, they are so afraid of getting wet, and if the wind blows and musses their hair, you don't want to ask

* From *Harper's Young People*, by permission of Messrs. Harper & Bros.

them to do anything for you then, because they wont't do anything for anybody just then. They can't fish, either, because they're afraid of the water in the first place, the bait in the second place, and the fish in the third place. If they could go fishing in a wagon in a flower garden, with candy for bait, and be mighty certain they would not catch anything that was alive, they'd like it; but fishing for fish isn't any fun for girls; which I can't see why, because I think a person that can't enjoy fishing has got something wrong with him, and ought to be evaded. Some people think it cruel to fish, and maybe it is, and if it is, I'm sorry. I'd rather fish without hurting anybody; and that's why I went fishing once and caught a whole lot of minnows without hurting them or a single worm, by taking my sister's straw hat and pulling it through the water like a bucket, bringing up seven minnows at a dip; but it was cruel sport just the same, only I was the one that got hurt when the news reached home, which it did just before me, as it wouldn't have if my sister hadn't been a girl, who are tattletales of the worst description. I heard a man say once, 'Blood will tell.'

Peter (*interrupting*). It's quar-quarter t-t-to n-nine.

Harry. Well, brother, wait a second, can't you? I'm most through. "I heard a man say once, 'Blood will tell,' but it can't beat a girl for telling. But I got even with her afterwards. I gave her a book called 'Sports for Boys' the next Christmas, and she didn't like it a bit. Boys are more ingenious than girls, too. Edison, who invented the telegraph wires, was a boy. So was George Washington and Buck Ewing, the captain of the New Yorks. No girls could have been those, but boys can and may. I'll be President some day, but my sister never will, which is a good thing, because we'd have a war right off with some one, she is so quarrelsome." Yours truly, Harry Mullins.*

Peter. I must s-s-say my p-p-piece to s-s-see if I know it.

Widow. There isn't time. No, you must hurry to school.

Children. Oh, yes! Let him say it. We'll run. Yes, we'll run!

Tom. Letter go, Peter!

Peter (*stammering abominably*).

"If all the words should have a race
I'm certain that the winner
Would be the word I love the most;
What is that word? Why, 'dinner.'"

* From *Harper's Young People* by permission of Messrs. Harper & Bros.

It means so many, many things—
  Roast beef, and pie, and 'taters,
And every dish so fair and fine
  That to my hunger caters.

And when I get to be a man,
  As sure as I'm a sinner,
My crest shall be a table set,
  My motto will be 'dinner!' *

Children (*laughing and pointing*). The man who always wants dinner! Ha, ha, ha! Peter, the dinner-eater! Hip, hip, hurrah for Peter!

Widow. Come now, all aboard for school.

Boys and larger girls. Yes, ma, we're off. Good-bye!

[*The girls have got their cloaks on while* HARRY *was reading his composition. All except* FAITH, HOPE, *and* CHARITY *go to the door at* L. *These three step to the front with school bags and books, and sing the following verses to the air of "Three Little Maids from School," from the "Mikado."*

THREE LITTLE MULLINS GIRLS.

All. Three little Mullins girls are we
Singing to you this melody,
Gay as the birds in Spring-time glee—
  Three little Mullins girls!

Faith. Sometimes hungry, but never crying;

Hope. Sometimes frozen, yet never sighing;

Char. Happy as cats in the sunshine lying—

All. Three little Mullins girls!
Three little girls who mind their mother
Unlike Peter, their lazy brother,
Always loving one another—
  Three little Mullins girls!
  Three little Mullins girls!

Faith. Now we are bound for the school-house gray;

Hope. First we'll work and then we'll play;

Char. To-morrow we keep holiday,—

All. Three little Mullins girls!

Faith. Old Father Christmas is almost here;

Hope. Over the mountains, sweet and clear,

Char. His sleigh-bells ring in the list'ning ear

All. Of three little Mullins girls.

* From *Harper's Young People*, by permission of Messrs Harper & Bros.

Three little girls who mind their mother,
Unlike Peter, their naughty brother,
Always loving one another,
Three little Mullins girls !
Three little Mullins girls !

All. Three little Mullins girls are we
Three little hearts so light and free
Busy as the bumble-bee,—
Three little Mullins girls !
Faith. When the day is calm and mild,
Hope. And the snow lies undefiled,
Char. Down the hill we coast like wild—
All. Three little Mullins girls !
And if bleak and cold the weather
We just nestle close together, [*They nestle together.*
Like the birdies in the heather—
Three little Mullins girls !
Three little Mullins girls !
Faith. Down we go, the trees fly by
Hope. Like a blur against the sky—
Char. But we're not afraid,—we fly,
All. Three little Mullins girls !
Faith. When the moon begins to peep, [*Softly.*
Hope. And the icicles cease to weep,
Char. You will find us fast asleep. [*All nod sleepily.*
All. Three little Mullins girls !
And if bleak and cold the weather,
We just nestle close together
Like the birdies in the heather, etc.

[*While the last lines are being sung the boys* **exeunt** ; *as the three finish they run out by the door, waving "good-bye."*

Widow. Well, I declare ! If those children keep on they'll turn into full-grown opera-singers some day. That would be a fine thing, wouldn't it ? Then the Widow Mullins could carry her head as high as any of yer grand folks, and put on lace and ruffles. . . I guess that day's a long way off though ; it's the washing day's here just now, (*turning to wash-tubs*) so I'll have to quit building castles in the air at once, and build castles in soap suds instead. (*She sets to work with a will ; sings snatches of songs while working. Gets thoughtful, and, stopping for a moment, says :* I wonder what I'm going to do about it. Here it is nearly Christmas and I haven't given the matter a thought. I'll have to get something for Faith, Hope, and Charity, and the boys, or they'll be terribly disappointed.

Faith and Charity both need a new pair of shoes badly, but I don't see how I can afford them ; and they couldn't possibly get along without a big turkey for dinner. I don't know how in the world I'm going to make them all happy this Christmas. (GUY *and* SWY *peep in at door* R.) It does seem as if out of all the well-off people there are in this town, some one would come to the assistance of a poor widow like me. Now look at the Millingtons, with their two boys ; those fellows have all the money they want to fritter away on all sorts of foolishness. But would you ever catch them giving anything to the poor people of the town for Christmas ? Not much ! Two stingier fellows I never heard of ! And then there are the Higginses, and the Reynolds, and the Archibalds—they all roll in wealth, every one of them ; but nobody is any happier for it. I won't ask for charity though, that's against my principles. No, I'll talk it over with the girls to-night, and we'll make it out the best we can. (*Squeezing water from the last piece and dropping it into the basket.*) There. So far, so good. I must hang up these things and get at it again.

[*Puts on hood, takes basket, and* **exit** R.

Enter *stealthily* GUY *and* SWY.

Guy. Ssh ! The widow is out and the children all at school ; we've got the whole house to ourselves. We must make out our plan of campaign in a hurry, though, for she'll soon be back. Perhaps she will change her opinion of us when we get through with our little scheme. See, there's a regular old-fashioned fireplace ; can't we make our entrance by the chimney in regular Santa Claus fashion ? (*Peering up the chimney.*) Yes. It's almost straight, and doesn't look so very sooty, either. Keep your eye on the widow, Swy ! Don't let her surprise us.

Swy (*peeping through the doorway*). All right. She's got half a basketful to dispose of yet.

Guy. Everything seems favorable. I only hope the youngsters won't be scared into fits when we tumble into the room.

Swy. Oh, they're not to be scared at a little. Besides, whoever heard of a child being frightened at dear old Santa ?

Guy. Dear old humbug ! Whoever knew a child who saw his mythical majesty, my wise brother ?

Swy. Now, don't get up a row here ! Talk lower—the widow's looking this way.

Guy. Well, that's settled. We come down the chimney, leaving our reindeer on the roof—uncomfortable position for us, brother mine, if any of the kids go out to look for the deer and find them not, eh ?

Swy. If we don't mention them they'll never think of it (*neglecting his watch for a minute*) and if they do, tell 'em our

coachman didn't wait for us, but is to call for us with sleigh and reindeer at 10 P. M. sharp. (*Resumes his watch.*) By George, the widow's almost here! (*Confusion.*) We can't go out that way—run for the front door—run!

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT III.

Scene.—*Cottage interior, same as Act II. Time, the night before Christmas.* FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY *and* MARIA LOUISE *are playing "Tiddledy Winks," on the floor* R. F. SUSAN *is rocking the cradle behind them. The younger boys are engaged in popping corn, cracking nuts, etc., at the fireplace.* PETER *is eating an immense ball of popcorn,* L. F. MARY ANN *and the* WIDOW *are sewing at table* C. *It is a stormy night outside; the wind howls and whistles through the cracks, and the sleet beats against the windows. As the curtain rises they are all singing "It's a long way round the year, my dear;" just as they finish,* TOM **enters** *out of breath, with cap drawn down over his ears, and market basket on his arm.*

Tom (*shaking off snow*). Whew, but this is a fearful night! I most lost my way several times, for it's black as pitch out, and the snow came so fast it almost blinded me. (*Takes off his things, warms his hands at the fire a minute, then picks up the basket, and going to his mother, says in an aside to her.*) There, ma, I've got everything in there. There was only one turkey left. Mr. Holt said he'd make me a present of that, so I took it. If it ain't enough to go around p'raps I can get another somewhere else to-morrow.

[WIDOW MULLINS *takes the basket and goes behind screen at back of room;* TOM *stands watching the girls play.*

Charity. Tom, come here a minute; I want to whisper something to you. (TOM *bends over her; she whispers.*) Tom, do you think the storm will keep Santa Claus away? (TOM *shakes his head with a smile.*) Oh, I'm so glad; I was afraid it might. Is it my turn, Maria?

Maria Louise. Wait a second. (*She plays.*) There, now it is. Go ahead! [CHARITY *plays.*

Tom. Hurrah! Good for Charity! I bet on Charity every time. [CHARITY *looks up and smiles.*

Hope. Oh, Charity's no good! I can beat Charity any day. Watch me now!

[*She takes great care, but goes wide of the mark.*

Tom. Ho, ho, ho ! You're a fine player, you are ! You didn't come within a mile of the cup. (*By this time it is* CHARITY'S *turn again.*) Now, Charity, careful ! You must get your man in this time, sure. (CHARITY *plays and gets her man in.*) That's the ticket ! Good for you ! You're my girl—you can beat 'em every time.

[*He picks her up and they dance around the room together,* TOM *singing "Rig-a-jig-jig and away we go."*

Dick (*pointing to* PETER). I say, fellows, look at Peter stuffing that monster pop-corn ball all by himself. (*Walks over to* PETER, *and gives him a sounding slap on the shoulder.*) Come, old man, don't be stingy. Give us a bite. (PETER *lets him take a bite.*) Thanks !

Harry (*jumping up.*) Give me one too, Peter.

[*All the boys crowd around him.*

James. And me !

John. And me !

Tom (*going over with* CHARITY.) Come, Charity. We're in this, too.

Peter. I c-c-can't give you all bites ! It ain't b-b-big enough !

All. Oh, yes, you can. You've had your share anyway !

[*They hold* PETER *until each one has had a bite. This leaves* PETER *only a single kernel of popcorn, which he regards with a rueful countenance.*

Peter. I think you f-f-folks are t-t-too mean for anything. N-now I haven't got any m-more pop-pop-popcorn.

Dick. Poor, boy ! Well, never mind. I guess you won't starve.

Harry (*handing* PETER *the popper filled with popcorn.*) No ; we couldn't bear to see you starve ! Here, help yourself.

[PETER *sits down and continues eating.*

Enter WIDOW MULLINS.

Widow. Come, children, it's 'most bed-time. We must all go early on Christmas Eve, you know, in case Santa Claus should come here first and find us all awake.

Charity (*running to her mother*). Oh, mamma, tell us about Santa Claus and then we'll all go good.

Faith, Hope, *and* **Maria Louise** (*in chorus*). Yes, mamma, do tell us about the good old fellow.

James *and* **John.** Yes, momsey dear, and tell us all about his deer.

Dick. And his toys.

Charity. Yes, and his dolls.

Harry. And what kind of skates he carries.

Peter. And wh-what he has g-g-good to eat.

Tom (*winking at* PETER). And whether he likes popcorn. In fact, tell us all about him, ma.

Widow. Well, well, seein' it's the night before Christmas, I suppose I'll have to indulge you a little. So all sit down and make yourselves comfortable, and I'll try to tell you the story.

[*The girls cease playing "Tiddledy Winks." All group themselves about their mother in comfortable positions.* PETER *puts away the popper and seats himself with the rest.*

Widow (*seated at table* C. *with* CHARITY *in her lap*). Away, 'way up in the North, where there's always ice and snow, in a fine big castle all by himself, lives dear old Santa Claus; he hasn't any children of his own, but he's so fond of them that he makes believe every body else's children are his; and so he calculates once a year to pay them all a visit, and give them all a present and a good time generally. He works hard all the year in his work-shop making dolls, and toys, and all manner of nice things. Then, when Christmas Eve comes, he says to himself, "I've got everything ready, and now it's time for my fun. I'll load up my sleigh, hitch up my reindeer, and then go racing down South as fast as the wind. I'll creep down the chimney of every house where there's a good boy or girl, and put something nice in their stockings. And when they wake up in the morning, how happy they'll be, and how they'll bless dear old Santa Claus." So then he loads up his sleigh, and when all is ready, snaps his whip and cries "Ho, Dunder and Blitzen and Dancer and Prancer!—go it, now, and do your best!" So off they start; and the bells jingle merrily, and the snow flies in clouds; and jolly old Santa Claus sings lively tunes to amuse himself and keep himself warm, until he gets almost here. Then he goes slower and more cautiously so's not to make too much noise. The first chimney he comes to, he listens for a moment to see if all is quiet. Then he climbs down and fills the stockings, and in a few minutes is off again. The next chimney he doesn't stop to listen, but goes right down and gets to work. And soon, he gets so over his fear of being caught, when he sees that every one is asleep, that he dances around, cracks jokes, and has a fine time all by himself. (*Here* JOHN *and* JAMES *whisper earnestly to each other.*) Then it is that sometimes curious children try to catch him; but they can never do it, for he always gets away, and sometimes before he has filled their stockings. (*She notices* JOHN *and* JAMES.) What are you two boys whispering so industriously about?

John. Oh, something!

Widow. Something, eh? Well, what is that something?

James. Oh, nothing much! We were just trying to think how we could see the old fellow.

Widow. Ah, I thought so! You had better not think any more about it. If you should try anything like that he'd catch you sure, and then you wouldn't get a thing. No, sound asleep in bed is the place where all good boys and girls must be when Santa Claus comes. That's where my little boys and girls should be now—see, they can hardly keep their eyes open!

[PETER *has fallen asleep and* CHARITY *almost; she rouses up.*

Charity. Oh, no, we haven't, mamma. Please tell us some more. Do you think Santa Claus will bring me some new shoes?

[*Pointing to her toe, which protrudes through a hole in her shoe.*

Widow. I hope so, my dear, I hope so! You need them bad enough. (PETER *begins to snore.*) See, your big brother's snoring; *that* means bed-time, sure.

John *and* **James.** 'Sh! ma, 'sh! Let us have some fun with him.

Tom (*who has been conversing with* MARY *for the past few moments while she has been plying her needle*). Who wants to hear Mary Ann tell the story of little Miss Betty, before we go to bed?

Dick. I do!

Harry. So do I!

John *and* **James.** And we do, too!

(*They tickle* PETER. *Business. He mutters "More t-t-turkey," and "I want some m-m-more m-m-mince-pie."*

Faith *and* **Hope.** We girls do; won't you tell it, Mary Ann?

M. L. (*hugging* MARY *and giving her a kiss*). Yes, dear sister Mary, do tell it for us.

Peter (*making as if to take a big bite, and in so doing almost biting* JAMES' *finger as the latter is tickling his nose.*) That's goo-goo-good. (*While he is still rapturously working his jaw, he wakes up.*) Wh-what's the m-m-m-matter? Where's it g-g-gone?

James. What? Where's what gone?

Peter. Why, the m-mince-p-p-p-pie!

Tom (*shaking him*). Down into your stomach long ago, you glutton! Where'd you suppose? Go upstairs to bed, will you, or else keep quiet while your sister tells her story!

Peter. I th-thought Santa C-C-Claus was feeding me t-turkey and min-min-mince-pie!

Tom. Well, he wasn't, so keep quiet will you? All right now; go ahead, Mary Ann.

[MARY *recites "Maid Bess," from "St. Nicholas" Magazine of December,* 1893. *As she finishes the children all applaud.*

Widow. That's very good. Betty must have been a smart

little maid to do what she did. I wonder if any of my little girls would have known what to do in Betty's place?

M. L. I don't believe they would. I shouldn't have.

Faith. Nor I, either.

Hope. No, neither should I.

Charity. Well, if I'd been there I'd have said, "You naughty bad men, go right away, and don't you dare touch my papa and mamma!"

Dick. Yes; but what if they wouldn't go?

Charity. Well, I don't know, but I'd made 'em go away somehow.

Widow. Of course you would, dear! Charity would have found a way all right. But come, now! It's bed-time, and you must all go at once.

Tom. Just one thing before we go, ma. I promised the boys I'd recite "The Sleigh-Ride" for them; so here goes, and you must all chime in in the chorus.

[TOM *recites the piece, which may be found in the December number of "St. Nicholas" for* 1893, *while all sing the refrain at the end of each verse.*

Widow (*as they stop singing*). There. That's all for to-night. Now light your candles and hurry off to bed.

[MARY *and* TOM *take down candles and candle-sticks from the mantel, light candles, and supply the children with them. The* WIDOW MULLINS *takes the lamp and starts for the door.*

Charity. But, mamma, aren't we going to hang up our stockings?

Widow. Oh, yes. Get on your night-gowns first; and then, if you are very good I'll let you run down for a minute and hang them up. [**Exit** WIDOW, R.

Peter (*pulling up trouser-legs and disclosing bare ankles*). But w-w-what am I g-g-going to d-do. I haven't got any s-s-s stockings.

Tom. Oh, you don't need any. Santa Claus won't bring you anything anyway.

Peter. I know what I'll d-d-do. I'll hang up my p-p-p-pants!

Charity. Tom, dear, ride me up pussy-back, won't you?

Tom. All right,—jump up!

[TOM *takes* CHARITY *on his back and leads the procession from the room. Girls all follow him to door* R. *Boys go to door* L. *Just as they are leaving some one proposes a rousing cheer for Santa Claus; the cheer is given with such a will that the baby wakes and begins to cry.*

Susan. Oh dear! Now those younguns have gone and woken up the baby just as I got it nicely to sleep. (*Taking it*

from the cradle.) I think it's a shame,—there, there, don't cry, my pet! Yes, it was too bad, so it was!

Tom (*entering*). Hello! What's the matter, Sue? Did the baby wake up?

Susan. Of course he did! You all made racket enough to wake up twenty babies. I wish you'd be a little more careful.

Tom. We didn't mean to; but it's Christmas Eve, you know, and we all have to have a good time. So there's no use in being cross about it. He'll soon go to sleep again. Let me see the little fellow. (*Looks at baby, stoops over, and gives it a kiss.*) There, old man. Be good now, and go right to sleep for your sister. He'll be O. K. in a minute or two, Sue. He's most asleep now. I must go along and see what those kids are up to. [**Exit** TOM, L.

[SUSAN *sings Tennyson's "Lullaby," "Sweet and Low" singing slower and slower till, at the end of the last verse, she falls asleep with the baby in her arms.* GUY MELLINGTON *descends chimney, disguised as* SANTA CLAUS. *He brushes off the snow and says.*

Guy. Whew! But it's cold up there on the roof. I almost froze my fingers in clambering up; Swy must be enjoying himself up there. He had to do something, so I dressed him up as an old man whom I call Zero, and am going to pass him off as my assistant. Wonder where everybody has gone—the stockings aren't hung yet, so they can't be abed. (*Discovers* SUSAN.) Hello! (*Crosses over and looks at her.*) Sound asleep, both of them!

Swy (*calling from the roof, and imitating the voice of an old man*). Hey there, Santa, hurry up and call me down!

Guy. There he goes. I thought he'd be calling in a minute. (*Crossing to fireplace and calling up chimney.*) All right, Zero, lower the pack!

[*The pack is let down the chimney by means of a rope, and* SWY *follows, shivering and brushing the snow from his cloak.*

Swy (*angrily, his teeth chattering*). D'you want a fellow to freeze to death up there in a blinding snow-storm? You must think I'm made of cast-iron by the way you keep me waiting!

Guy (*pointing to* SUSAN *and the child*). 'Sh! Don't talk so loud; you'll wake the baby. I didn't keep you waiting any longer than I could help; had to make sure the track was clear. (*Looking himself over.*) How do I look, old man, anyhow? Do you think I'll fulfill the children's expectations of the dear old saint?

Swy. Oh yes! You'll do all right. You only need to put on more of a swagger when you walk, and a general air of jollity, and a better looking Santa Claus couldn't be wished for. How do I pass for Zero?

Guy. First class. Only don't forget to make yourself as small as possible; remember, you're a dwarf.

Swy (*doubling himself up as much as possible, and speaking in a squeaky voice*). Well, Grandpa Santa, what d'ye want next?

Guy (*speaking in gruff, yet withal a pleasant voice*). Zero, dear, I feel so gay I don't know how to contain myself! I think—to work off some of my animal spirits,—I'll go through the dance with you.

Swy. The dance it is, dear Grandpa.

[*They caper about, and go through an impromptu dance, to the music of the dance appended to the song "Baby, baby, dance my darling baby," playing leap-frog with each other, etc. Suddenly they stop in a listening attitude,* C.

Guy. Hark!

Swy. Did you hear something?

[*They go to opposite doors* R. *and* L., *open them, listen a moment, and rush noiselessly back to* C.

Guy. They're coming!

Swy. I heard them!

[*They retire to the hearth and busy themselves sorting out the toys.* SUSAN *gradually wakes up and rubs her eyes. She sees* SANTA *and* ZERO, *and rubs them again vigorously, almost dropping the baby in her astonishment. Puts baby in cradle, and says in a low voice,*

Susan. Can that be really Santa Claus, or am I dreaming? (*Pinches herself and shows signs of feeling it.*) No, I'm awake, that's certain! I never believed in Santa Claus before, but my eyes don't deceive me. That's him, surely. Can I slip out, I wonder, and tell the children?

[**Enter** CHARITY *in her nightgown, carrying a candle. She sees* SANTA, *and rushes out in joy.* JAMES *and* JOHN *appear at door, but* SUSAN *motions them back. She then slips out door at* R. *All the girls peep in at door* R., *all the boys at door* L. *They beckon to each other.*

Santa. There, Zero, old fellow, everything's all there, isn't it?

Zero. Yes, sir, all there. Just let's arrange these dolls a little better, and then—

[*The children, the younger ones arrayed in their nightgowns, with bare feet, and holding a stocking in one hand and a candle in the other, have crept in stealthily and grouped themselves behind the two. They here interrupt* ZERO *with a joyous shout of "Hello,* SANTA CLAUS,—*we've caught you!"* SANTA, *much astonished tries to escape, but they surround him and take him prisoner.*

Santa. Well, well, I didn't bargain for this. I thought all these little girls and boys were snugly tucked away in their beds, and instead of that they've caught me here! Dear! dear! Here's lots of other children to be visited, and I'm arrested the first thing. Well, now you've caught me, what's to be my fate?

Charity. Give us our presents and play with us some, and then we'll let you go.

Santa. All right, my dears, if that's all you ask I'll soon have you satisfied, and be whirling on my way to see all the other boys and girls. Zero, the presents; hand them to me.

Zero. Yes, Grandpa dear, here they are.

Faith. What a funny old man!

Hope. Yes, and what a squeaky voice.

Dick. Who is yer pardner, Santay?

Santa (*taking the things from* ZERO). Here, step forth and show yourself. This, my dear children, is my most esteemed helper, Mr. Zero. I'm getting so old now, and there are so many children to visit, that I have to have someone to help me out; this little old gentleman does it, and a fine old fellow he is too. (*Hands* CHARITY *a pair of shoes.*) Here, my good little girl, are some things to keep your little feet warm; here's something for you two; (*hands* FAITH *and* HOPE *each a pair of mittens.*) John, here's some choo-choo cars for you. Now you can play you're an engineer on the New York Central. (*Hands him a train of cars.*) And James,—let's see, Zero, what have we got for James? (ZERO *hands* SANTA *a Noah's Ark.*) Oh, yes; here it is,—a fine new Noah's Ark. Now get to work, my boy, and see if you can pick out Shem, Ham, and Japheth! Maria Louise, I'm glad to see you've been such a good girl, and helped your mother take care of your younger sisters. Here is a nice new hood that will keep your ears warm on a cold winter's day, and in addition, as a special reward, a fine big box of candy. (MARIA LOUISE *takes them and thanks him.*) Dick and Harry, you've been pretty good boys, I think, so here's something to amuse yourselves with. Be careful how you use them, and don't shoot any poor little birds. (*Hands them each an air rifle. They dance about and have a mock duel at the back of the stage.*) Mary Ann and Susan Jane, here are some packages for you. They contain something nice which I know you'll like, but you mus'n't open them till I've departed. Tom, you too deserve a good present,—(*handing him a package*) here it is. (TOM *opens it and finds some books.*) And, mamma dear, here is something for you. (*Hands her a basket.*) A lot of good, serviceable articles, which you will find very useful. Now I believe my task is done. I've distributed all the presents and must— (PETER *sobs violently.*) Why, what's the matter here? What are you crying about, Peter?

Peter. You didn't g-g-give m-me a p-p-p-p-present!

Santa. I didn't? Well, well, brace up! Don't cry about it. Zero, isn't there anything left we can give Peter? (ZERO *produces a jumping-jack.*) Here, Peter boy, here's something that'll dry your tears,—make it go, and see if it don't! (PETER *pulls the string and is soon laughing merrily.*) Let's see, Zero, haven't we forgotten something? Yes, the babies; we haven't given them the babies. John and James, put away your toys now; we've got something else for you. (*Hands them each a small darkey doll.*) Charity, here's your baby.

[*Gives her a fine big doll half as big as herself, and supplies the rest with dolls of various kinds. The* WIDOW *takes her own baby. All line up front of stage;* WIDOW *in center, children on either side.*

Santa (*surveying them*). Now are you all supplied? Yes, all except Peter. Peter, I've got a bigger baby for you. (*Takes away jumping-jack and hands him a big turkey.*) Some time ago I heard you all singing a sweet song, the refrain of which began "Baby, baby, dance my darling baby." You wonder when and how I heard you? Ah, never mind; the sound of children's voices sometimes floats even to my far northern home, even as a whispered prayer on earth assails the gates of Heaven; but I see by your faces you have not forgotten the song. Let us all sing it now, and may you all live to sing it for many years to come. Ready? then—go!

[*Everyone joins in singing the "Baby Song" from "Wang;" as they are finishing,* ZERO *ascends chimney, and* SANTA CLAUS *stands in fireplace ready to follow him. When the last note has been sung he says.*

Santa. Good-by, children dear! I'm off again till next year. My visit to-night has been a pleasant one, and I hope to see you every one twelve months from this very night. So farewell again; farewell! A merry, merry Christmas to you all!

All. Hip, hip, hurrah for Santa Claus! Hip, hip, hurrah!

CURTAIN.

New Plays for Girls' Schools

By Elsie Fogerty and others

The following adaptations from standard plays, classical and modern, have been specially arranged for amateur performance in girls' schools. The text is accompanied in all cases by all necessary plates and diagrams, and by full and minute marginal notes and instructions for production. A copious introduction gives a full description of the stage, the lighting, the costumes, properties, both stage and hand, and answers in advance all possible questions that may come up in the process of rehearsal. In all respects they are the most complete and helpful versions of plays ever offered for acting.

The Alkestis of Euripides

Adapted by Elsie Fogerty

Nine characters and chorus.
Plays an hour and a half.
Price, 25 cents

The Antigone of Sophocles

Adapted by Elsie Fogerty

Eleven characters and chorus.
Plays two hours.
Price, 25 cents

Scenes From the Great Novelists

Adapted by Elsie Fogerty

Scenes from THE ABBOTT, by Scott. "The Changing of the Keys." Seven characters—plays forty minutes.
Scene from THE MILL ON THE FLOSS, by George Eliot. "Mrs. Pullet's New Bonnet." Five characters—plays twenty minutes.
Scene from ADAM BEDE, by George Eliot. "Mrs. Poyser has her Say." Five characters—plays twenty-five minutes.
Scene from A CHRISTMAS CAROL, by Dickens. "The Cratchits' Christmas Dinner." Eight characters—plays forty minutes.
Price, 25 cents

The Masque of Comus

By Milton. Adapted by Lucy Chater

Nine characters and chorus. Plays forty minutes; with music.
Price, 25 cents

The Enterprise of the Mayflower

In Four Acts, by Amice Macdonell

For Children. Fourteen characters.
Plays an hour an a half.
Price, 25 cents

Sent post-paid by mail on receipt of price

BAKER, 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

LOST—A CHAPERON

A Comedy in Three Acts by Courtney Bruerton and W. S. Maulsby. Six male, nine female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, an interior and an exterior. Plays a full evening. A lot of college girls in camp lose their chaperon for twenty-four hours, and are provided by a camp of college boys across the lake with plenty of excitement. The parts are all good, the situations are very funny and the lines full of laughs. Recommended for high-school performance. *Price, 25 cents*

THE PRIVATE TUTOR

A Farce in Three Acts by E. J. Whisler. Five male, three female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, two simple interiors. Plays two hours. Tells of the endeavors of two college boys to disguise the fact that they have been "rusticated" from the family of one of them. Hans Dinklederfer, the leader of a German band, trying to make good in the character of a private tutor, is a scream. All the parts are good. A capital high-school play. *Price, 25 cents*

THE REBELLION OF MRS. BARCLAY

A Comedy of Domestic Life in Two Acts by May E. Countryman. Three male, six female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, easy interiors. Plays one hour and three-quarters. A clever and amusing comedy with all the parts evenly good. There are many Mr. Barclays all over this country, and Mrs. Barclay's method of curing her particular one will be sympathetically received. Good Irish comedy parts, male and female. Strongly recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

THE TRAMPS' CONVENTION

An Entertainment in One Scene for Male Characters Only by Jessie A. Kelley. Seventeen male characters. Costumes, typical tramp dress; scenery, unimportant. Plays an hour and a half. An entertainment in the vaudeville class, with possibilities of unlimited fun. Music can be introduced, if desired, though this is not necessary. The opening is very funny and original and the finish—The Ananias Club—can be worked up to any extent. Strongly recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

THE DAY THAT LINCOLN DIED

A Play in One Act by Prescott Warren and Will Hutchins. Five male, two female characters. Costumes, modern; scene, an easy exterior. Plays thirty minutes. A very effective play suited for a Lincoln Day entertainment. It offers plenty of comedy, and is a piece that we can heartily recommend. Professional stage-rights reserved. *Price, 25 cents*

PA'S NEW HOUSEKEEPER

A Farce in One Act by Charles S. Bird. Three male, two female characters. Modern costumes; scenery, a simple interior or none at all. Plays forty minutes. Jack Brown, visiting his chum, is tempted by his success in college theatricals to make up in the character of the new housekeeper, an attractive widow, who is expected but does not arrive. He takes in everybody and mixes things up generally. All the parts are first rate and the piece full of laughs. Strongly recommended. *Price, 15 cents*

WILLOWDALE

A Play in Three Acts by Arthur Lewis Tubbs. Seven males, five females. Scenery, two easy interiors; costumes, modern. This is a play of exceptional interest and power. Admirably suited for amateur performance, all the parts being good. Godfrey is an admirable heavy part, Joel, Lem and Simon capital character parts, Mis' Hazey a novel eccentric bit, and Oleander a part of screaming comedy. Plays two hours and a quarter.

Price, 25 cents

THE VILLAGE SCHOOL MA'AM

A Play in Three Acts by Arthur Lewis Tubbs. Six males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenes, an interior and an exterior, or can be played in two interiors. Plays two hours or more. Combines a strong sympathetic interest with an abundance of comedy. The parts are unusually equal in opportunity, are vigorously drawn and easily actable. No dialect parts, but plenty of variety in the comedy rôles and lots of amusing incident. Can be strongly recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

BAR HAVEN

A Comedy in Three Acts by Gordan V. May. Six males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors and an exterior, not difficult. Plays two hours. An excellent piece, mingling a strongly serious interest with abundant humor. Offers a great variety of good parts of nearly equal opportunity. Admirably suited for amateur performance, and strongly recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

DOWN IN MAINE

A Drama in Four Acts by Charles Townsend. Eight male, four female characters. This play has no villains, no tangled plot nor sentimental love scenes; yet the climaxes are strong, the action brisk, and the humor genial, and the characters strongly drawn. Can be played in any hall; scenery, of the easiest sort. Properties, few and simple; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening. Strongly recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

HIGBEE OF HARVARD

A Comedy Drama in Three Acts by Charles Townsend. Five males, four females. Modern costumes; scenes, two interiors and an exterior—the latter may be played as well in an interior, if preferred. Plays a full evening. A clever, up-to-date piece, well suited for amateur performance. No small parts; all good. Good plot, full of incident, no love-making, interest strong and sustained. *Price, 15 cents*

HOW JIM MADE GOOD

A Comedy Drama in Four Acts by Charles S. Bird. Seven males, three females; two male parts can be doubled. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays two hours. An unusually sympathetic play, well suited to amateurs. Clean and easy to get up. Recommended to high schools. All the parts are good. *Price, 25 cents*

TAKING THE CENSUS IN BINGVILLE

An Entertainment in One Act by Jessie A. Kelley. Fourteen males, eight females. Costumes, modern; scenery, unimportant. Plays an hour and a half. One of the always popular go-as-you-please entertainments; just a lot of laughs strung on a very slender wire of story. Full of eccentric character bits and chances for local hits. A sure success for the laughter-loving. Recommended for church societies or intimate communities. *Price, 25 cents*

MISS PRIM'S KINDERGARTEN

An Entertainment in One Scene by Jessie A. Kelley. Ten males, eleven females. No scenery or curtain needed; costumes introduce grown people dressed as children. Plays an hour and a half. Full of laughs and a sure hit with the audience. All the parts very easy except the Teacher's, and as it is possible for her to use a book, the entertainment can be got up with exceptional ease and quickness. Can be recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

THE PACKING OF THE HOME MISSIONARY BARREL

An Entertainment in One Scene by Mrs. Henry A. Hallock. Ten females. Costumes, modern; scenery, unimportant. Plays thirty minutes. One of those little satires of feminine ways that are so popular even with the ladies; very shrewd and effective, but perfectly good-natured. An assured success and very easy to get up. Strongly recommended. *Price, 15 cents*

A MODERN SEWING SOCIETY

An Entertainment in One Scene by O. W. Gleason. Fourteen females. Costumes, modern; no scenery required. May be easily presented on a bare platform. Plays forty-five minutes. A humorous picture of this much-abused institution, briskly and vivaciously written and full of "points." Its characters offer a wide variety of opportunity for local hits, and satire of local characters and institutions. *Price, 15 cents*

HOW THE CLUB WAS FORMED

An Entertainment in Three Scenes by Mrs. O. W. Gleason. Eighteen females. Costumes, modern; scenery, unimportant. Plays one and a half hours. A humorous skit on the Woman's Club suited for performance by either young or middle-aged women. Full of points and chances for local hits and thus a sure laugh-maker. Parts well distributed; can be recommended. *Price, 15 cents*

SCENES IN THE UNION DEPOT

A Humorous Entertainment in One Scene by Laura M. Parsons. Twenty-four males, eighteen females and eight children, but can be played by less if desired. Scenery, unimportant; costumes, modern. Full of humorous points and chances to introduce local hits. Plays from an hour up, according to specialties introduced. *Price, 25 cents*

COMEDY SKETCHES

By Julian Sturgis

A collection of short plays suited for amateur theatricals or high-class vaudeville, easy to produce and of high quality. Recommended especially for parlor performance.

CONTENTS

APPLES. One male, one female.
FIRE FLIES. One male, one female.
HEATHER. One male, one female.
PICKING UP THE PIECES. One male, one female.
HALF-WAY TO ARCADY. One male, one female.
MABEL'S HOLY DAY. Two males, one female.

Twenty minutes each.

Price, 25 cents

IN OFFICE HOURS

And Other Sketches

By Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland

CONTENTS

IN OFFICE HOURS. Comedy Sketch in One Act, five males, four females.
A QUILTING PARTY IN THE THIRTIES. Outline Sketch for Music, six males, four females, and chorus.
IN AUNT CHLOE'S CABIN. Negro Comedy Sketch in One Act, seventeen female characters and "supers."
THE STORY OF A FAMOUS WEDDING. Outline Sketch for Music and Dancing, six males, four females.

Price, 25 cents

THE SOUP TUREEN

And Other Duologues

A collection of short plays for two and three characters. Good quality, high tone and confidently offered to the best taste.

CONTENTS

THE SOUP TUREEN. One male, two females.
LELIA. One male, one female.
THE UNLUCKY STAR. Two males.
THE SERENADE. Two females.

Play twenty minutes each.

Price, 25 cents

HOLIDAY DIALOGUES FROM DICKENS

Arranged by W. E. Fette

Comprising selections from "The Christmas Carol," "The Cricket on the Hearth," "The Battle of Life," etc., arranged in a series of scenes to be given either singly or together, as an extended entertainment. For the celebration of Christmas no better material can be found.

Price, 25 cents

THE CRIMSON COCOANUT

And Other Plays

By Ian Hay

This collection contains the following titles, all of which can be confidently recommended for amateur performance in schools or elsewhere as high in tone and exceptionally amusing. Mr. Hay is well known as a novelist and literary man.

THE CRIMSON COCOANUT

An Absurdity in One Act. Four males, two females. Costumes, modern; scenery, an interior. Plays thirty-five minutes. Mr. Pincher, of Scotland Yard, in pursuit of some dangerous anarchists, entangles the lady of his choice and her father in some humorous perils, but ends by capturing both the criminals and the lady. Author's royalty of $5.00 for amateur performance.

A LATE DELIVERY

A Play in Three Episodes. Three males, two females. Scene, an interior; costumes, modern. Plays forty minutes. Bill, a middle-aged admirer of Marjorie, learns just as he has finished a letter to her proposing marriage that Tim, a young man, is also in love with her. He assumes her to love his rival and does not mail the letter. She finds it on his desk and opens it, and learning the truth makes choice of the older and better man. Royalty for amateurs, $5.00 for each performance.

THE MISSING CARD

A Comedietta in One Act. Two males, two females. Scene, an interior; costumes, modern. Plays thirty minutes. Two elderly admirers of Mrs. Millington decide to deal the pack to see which shall first propose to her, the one who gets the Queen of Hearts to win. She privately takes this card out of the pack and when they have gone through it in vain, announces her engagement to another man. Royalty for amateurs, $5.00 a performance.

Price, all three in one volume, 50 cents

THE MARRIAGE OF JACK AND JILL

A Mother Goose Entertainment in Two Scenes

By Lilian Clisby Bridgham

Forty children. Costumes, wedding; no scenery required. Plays forty minutes. A Mother Goose wedding and reception carried out by the smallest children. Very pretty and easy to get up; strongly recommended. Not a pantomime merely, but calls for some speaking parts.

Price, 25 cents

THE ELOPEMENT OF ELLEN

A Farce Comedy in Three Acts by Marie J. Warren. Four males, three females. Costumes, modern; scenery, one interior and one exterior. Plays an hour and a half. A bright and ingenious little play, admirably suited for amateur acting. Written for and originally produced by Wellesley College girls. Strongly recommended.

Price, 25 cents

A VIRGINIA HEROINE

A Comedy in Three Acts by Susie G. McGlone. Eleven female characters. Scenery, easy; costumes, modern. Plays one hour and forty-five minutes. Irish and Negro comedy parts, and two character parts; most of the characters young. A very easy and interesting play for girls, well suited for school performance. Romantic interest with lots of comedy.

Price, 25 cents

OUR CHURCH FAIR

A Farcical Entertainment in Two Acts by Jessie A. Kelley. Twelve females. Costumes, modern; scenery, unimportant. Plays an hour and a quarter. A humorous picture of the planning of the annual church fair by the ladies of the sewing circle. Full of local hits and general human nature, and a sure laugh-producer in any community. Can be recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

ALL CHARLEY'S FAULT

A Farce in Two Acts by Anthony E. Wills. Six males, three females. Scenery, an easy interior; costumes, modern. Plays two hours. A very lively and laughable piece, full of action and admirably adapted for amateur performance. Dutch and Negro comedy characters. Plays very rapidly with lots of incident and not a dull moment. Strongly recommended. *Price, 15 cents*

HOW THE STORY GREW

An Entertainment for Women's Clubs in One Act by O. W. Gleason. Eight female characters. Costumes, modern; scenery, unimportant; may be given on a platform without any. Plays forty-five minutes. A very easy and amusing little piece, full of human nature and hitting off a well-known peculiarity of almost any community. Written for middle-aged women, and a sure hit with the audience. *Price, 15 cents*

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR

A Comedy Drama in Four Acts by Arthur Lewis Tubbs. Six males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays two hours. Easy to stage and full of interest. The female parts are the stronger, being exceptionally good. Negro and "hayseed" comedy parts. A very strong dramatic piece. Can be recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

THE VILLAGE POST-OFFICE

An Entertainment in One Scene by Jessie A. Kelley. Twenty-two males and twenty females are called for, but one person may take several parts and some characters may be omitted. The stage is arranged as a country store and post-office in one. Costumes are rural and funny. Plays a full evening. Full of "good lines" and comical incident and character. Strongly recommended for church entertainments or general use; very wholesome and clean. *Price, 25 cents*

MISS FEARLESS & CO.

A Comedy in Three Acts by Belle Marshall Locke. Ten females. Scenery, two interiors; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening. A bright and interesting play full of action and incident. Can be strongly recommended. All the parts are good. Sarah Jane Lovejoy, Katie O'Connor and Euphemia Addison are admirable character parts, and Miss Alias and Miss Alibi, the "silent sisters," offer a side-splitting novelty.
Price, 25 cents

LUCIA'S LOVER

A Farce in Three Acts by Bertha Currier Porter. Eight females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays an hour and a half. A bright and graceful piece, light in character, but sympathetic and amusing. Six contrasted types of girls at boarding-school are shown in a novel story. Lots of fun, but very refined. Easy to produce and can be strongly recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

A GIRL IN A THOUSAND

A Comedy in Four Acts by Evelyn Gray Whiting. Fourteen females. Costumes, modern; scenes, three interiors and an exterior. Plays a full evening. Very strong and sympathetic and of varied interest. Irish comedy; strong "witch" character; two very lively "kids"; all the parts good. Effective, easy to produce, and can be strongly recommended as thoroughly wholesome in tone as well as amusing. *Price, 25 cents*

MRS. BRIGGS OF THE POULTRY YARD

A Comedy in Three Acts by Evelyn Gray Whiting. Four males, seven females. Scene, an interior; costumes, modern. A domestic comedy looking steadfastly at the "bright side" of human affairs. Mrs. Briggs is an admirable part, full of original humor and quaint sayings, and all the characters are full of opportunity. Simply but effectively constructed, and written with great humor. Plays two hours. *Price, 25 cents*

TOMMY'S WIFE

A Farce in Three Acts by Marie J. Warren. Three males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays an hour and a half. Originally produced by students of Wellesley College. A very original and entertaining play, distinguished by abundant humor. An unusually clever piece, strongly recommended. *Price, 25 cents*

A. W. Pinero's Plays

Price, 50 Cents Each

THE MAGISTRATE Farce in Three Acts. Twelve males, four females. Costumes, modern; scenery, all interior. Plays two hours and a half.

THE NOTORIOUS MRS. EBBSMITH Drama in Four Acts. Eight males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, all interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE PROFLIGATE Play in Four Acts. Seven males, five females. Scenery, three interiors, rather elaborate; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS Farce in Three Acts. Nine males, seven females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY Play in Four Acts. Eight males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, three interiors. Plays a full evening.

SWEET LAVENDER Comedy in Three Acts. Seven males, four females. Scene, a single interior; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE TIMES Comedy in Four Acts. Six males, seven females. Scene, a single interior; costumes, modern. Plays a full evening.

THE WEAKER SEX Comedy in Three Acts. Eight males, eight females. Costumes, modern; scenery, two interiors. Plays a full evening.

A WIFE WITHOUT A SMILE Comedy in Three Acts. Five males, four females. Costumes, modern; scene, a single interior. Plays a full evening.

Sent prepaid on receipt of price by

Walter H. Baker & Company

No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 034 076 580 1

The William Warren Edition of Plays

Price, 15 Cents Each

AS YOU LIKE IT Comedy in Five Acts. Thirteen males, four females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening.

CAMILLE Drama in Five Acts. Nine males, five females. Costumes, modern; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening.

INGOMAR Play in Five Acts. Thirteen males, three females. Scenery varied; costumes, Greek. Plays a full evening.

MARY STUART Tragedy in Five Acts. Thirteen males, four females, and supernumeraries. Costumes, of the period; scenery, varied and elaborate. Plays a full evening.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE Comedy in Five Acts. Seventeen males, three females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery varied. Plays a full evening.

RICHELIEU Play in Five Acts. Fifteen males, two females. Scenery elaborate; costumes of the period. Plays a full evening.

THE RIVALS Comedy in Five Acts. Nine males, five females. Scenery varied; costumes of the period. Plays a full evening.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER Comedy in Five Acts. Fifteen males, four females. Scenery varied; costumes of the period. Plays a full evening.

TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL Comedy in Five Acts. Ten males, three females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery, varied. Plays a full evening.

Sent prepaid on receipt of price by

Walter H. Baker & Company

No. 5 Hamilton Place, Boston, Massachusetts